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Hizbollah warns Bonn to lay off Iran
BONN (AFP) — Hizbollah, the Iranian-backed Shiite Muslim militia in Lebanon, has warned Germany against waging a "campaign of harassment" against Iran, which has been accused of assassinating political opponents in Berlin. The German news weekly Der Spiegel, in a report to be published in Monday's editions citing "fundamentalist leaders," said that Hizbollah considers Germany to be increasingly linked to foes of the Islamic World. Relations between Germany and Iran have soured recently because of accusations by German federal prosecutors that Iranian leaders were linked to the 1992 murders of four Iranian Kurdish dissidents in a Berlin restaurant. Iran has denied the charges. Spiegel quoted the fundamentalists as saying that if Germany does not change its policies it will find itself increasingly unable to influence regional developments.

GCC urges Iraq to apply all U.N. resolutions
KUWAIT (AFP) — The six member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have called on Iraq to implement all United Nations resolutions, GCC Secretary-General Jamil Al Hujailan said Sunday. The principled position of the GCC countries is unchanged, Iraq must implement all the resolutions of the U.N. Security Council, Mr. Hujailan told the official Kuwait News Agency. He said that among the most important resolutions that Iraq needed to carry out referred to "the freeing of Kuwait and other detainees, the return of (looted) goods and the payment of compensation." Kuwait is still demanding information on 604 missing people, including 549 Kuwaitis, from the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait between August 1990 and February 1991. Iraq denies that it is holding any of the missing. In addition Kuwait is demanding \$98.4 billion from Iraq in compensation for damage and lost income.

Jordan voices grave concern over fate of peace process

King: I don't know how long one can wait and risk something terrible happening
Kabariti: We are frustrated over hearing something but seeing something else on the ground

HM calls for flexibility and vision on the part of Israeli prime minister

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter with agency dispatches

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein expressed concern on Sunday about lack of progress in the stalled Middle East peace process, saying he feared anything could happen to throw it off track.

In a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) interview with broadcaster David Frost, King Hussein said he was becoming impatient and talked about the urgency of the situation. "I think I am becoming a little impatient and a little concerned. Without visible progress in implementing agreements reached earlier between the Israeli government and the Palestinians in particular, we are at the mercy of events."

"Anything could happen that could throw us completely off the track we have chosen," he said.

King Hussein said delays in Israeli redeployment and handing over parts of Hebron to Palestinian self-rule were the most urgent issues.

"(Hebron) should have been sorted out, but let's hope that it will open the way for further negotiations in terms of the final status, negotiations that were agreed upon in the past, so that we have a conclusion, hopefully a happy one," the King said.

He described Israel's new right-wing leader



Benjamin Netanyahu as amiable but said his actions had not been very encouraging so far.

"In all our meetings we have had the impression we were covering ground rather well. He is extremely polite and amiable and at the same time he gave me the impression that things would be moving much more rapidly than they have."

"I am in a dilemma. I don't know how long one can wait and risk something terrible happening."

"Signs are not encouraging about the final status negotiations on Jerusalem. What I have noticed is that he (Netanyahu) has almost stuck to what he has said in the past. May be he would like to appear to have done so. But I believe what is needed is flexibility and vision, and an ability to arrive at something that is to be protected by all peoples in our region once and for all."

"I hope that we are giving Mr. Netanyahu the time to adjust to the realities of his responsibilities now together with his government, and I hope he will come through. But at some point if this does not happen, I feel the responsibility as I said earlier towards all the people in the area, including the Israelis to speak out and try to call on all those who believe in peace," the King said.

King Hussein warned: "If things are not moving, and

shooting of Rabin late last year.

Asked what could happen if people in the region fail to reap the peace dividends, King Hussein said he did not think that "this is related to a state of war, but certainly to a frame of mind, as far as people are concerned peace will be almost meaningless."

"The closures are still there in Palestine. Palestinians are unable to work. Their conditions of life are very difficult both in Gaza and the West Bank. On the Israeli side also there are alerts after alerts against possible terrorist attacks. When this becomes almost a daily occurrence, it gets people to act in a different way towards peace as such. It is not the way we started with hope and mutual confidence and determination. It started with the Hebron massacre. I suppose, then the terrible events that took place in Israel and a wave of crimes, and then Rabin and his loss. So on both sides there have been a small minority of people who have really almost spoiled the atmosphere in a serious way. It is our hope that something happens before people lose hope."

If the peace process is set back, King Hussein said, "all of us will suffer, the entire region and the whole world will suffer. I felt that it was a religious duty to continue to do whatever I could to ensure that finally between the descendants and children of Abraham peace was established in our region and in the world. We have done so much, we are so close but we still suffer."

PRIME MINISTER Abdul Karim Kabariti, in an interview published on Sunday accused Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu of double talk in Middle East peacemaking.

"We are more than puzzled, we are very much frustrated that what you hear is something and what you see on the ground is something else," Mr. Kabariti told the Israeli newspaper Maariv.

But a senior Israeli official dismissed Arab criticism of Israel's peace policies as "extremist rhetoric."

Jordan, partner to a 1994 peace treaty with Israel, had urged Arab states to give the right-wing Netanyahu a chance after his election as prime minister in May. But Mr. Kabariti said Jordan was confused by Israel's inconsistencies.

His criticism, the strongest by Jordan yet, echoed remarks by Arab states less friendly to Israel.

"We wanted very much to trust Netanyahu. We gave Netanyahu every single chance and we gave him the benefit of the doubt, and we went to the Arab summit meeting and we worked towards convincing everybody that this newly-elected prime minister needs time to get his act together," Mr. Kabariti said.

Israeli Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh, asked about Jordanian and Egyptian criticism of the current government, said:

"If they want to contribute to the success of the peace process, to furthering the peace process, they must stop such statements, they must reduce this extremist rhetoric."

Mr. Naveh told Israel

Radio that despite Mr. Netanyahu's commitment since taking office to the peace process there was a constant "orchestra" of criticism which itself was hindering peace moves.

Mr. Kabariti said Mr. Netanyahu told Jordanian officials before his election that his Likud Party would make peace with Arabs in the same way it did with Egypt, which in 1979 became the first Arab state to sign a treaty with Israel.

"So we thought he had it all worked out in his mind, and he has his strategy. Now the question is, does Bibi Netanyahu have a strategy or not? I don't know," the premier said.

Mr. Kabariti said that during a meeting with Mr. Netanyahu in London, the Israeli leader said he had only one problem with Yasser Arafat. He said Mr. Netanyahu wanted Mr. Arafat to close all Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem. Mr. Kabariti said that he talked to Mr. Arafat who complied; but then Mr. Netanyahu did not take any concrete steps to back his words.

He said Jordan has seen "too much inconsistency coming out from Israel. No one can make up their mind on what Israel now wants or is hoping for." There were sometimes inconsistent Israeli statements which embarrassed "us" because no one understands what Israel was looking for. Sharon for example had his own conviction and so have Rafael Eitan, minister of tourism, Israeli premier's office director (David) Bar Eilan and (Dory) Gold. Each one's conviction and statements contradict the other, so where is the strategy?



Abdul Karim Kabariti

egy?

Mr. Netanyahu's policy of enlarging Jewish West Bank settlements and delays in handing over parts of Hebron to Palestinian self-rule have raised doubts in the Arab World about his commitment to peace.

Mr. Kabariti said Jordan shared Mr. Arafat's concern over the continuity of the peace process; but the issue at hand was not only Hebron, but it transcended it. The whole atmosphere was poisoned and Jordanian confidence in a peace that might bring about welfare and security had diminished due to the delay of redeployment of Israeli army in Hebron.

Mr. Netanyahu opposes swapping land for peace, a cornerstone of five years of negotiations with the Arabs. His actions have embarrassed Jordan, and relations with Egypt have deteriorated under Mr. Netanyahu, and peace talks with Syria are stuck.

Mr. Kabariti criticised Mr. Netanyahu's decision last September to open a tourist tunnel in Jerusalem

near Al Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third holiest shrine. The ensuing violence claimed the lives of 60 Palestinians and 15 Israelis.

Mr. Kabariti voiced his support for the establishment of a Palestinian state based on the mutual agreements between both Palestinians and Israelis. Mr. Kabariti expressed his hope that the two sides might reach such an agreement in their final settlement negotiations.

He added that such a state would serve Israel security.

Mr. Kabariti warned of the current state of affairs, saying "we are at a crucial juncture, where our hopes and aspirations might vanish, if we fail to put an end to our hesitation and resume our peace march."

Mr. Kabariti said the failure to reach agreement on Hebron and the redeployment in this Arab town, and to pursue the march, then it will be extremely difficult to convince "ourselves why we have always believed in peace and in good intentions" at a time when the other party was not reciprocating.

Jordan does not have either a Likud or a Labour Party. However it had three camps as far as the peace process is concerned, Mr. Kabariti said, noting that there was a camp supporting the peace and adhering to it, an ideological minority which rejected peace and a third camp siding and watching what was going to happen. The latter camp was the one that we should talk to to gain support, according to Mr. Kabariti.

On Israeli-Egyptian relations, Mr. Kabariti said he

(Continued on page 7)

Arabs urge world not to finance Jewish settlements

Netanyahu insists he will expand colonies

CAIRO (Agencies) — The Arab League on Sunday urged the international community to avoid financing the construction of Jewish settlements in Palestinian territories and the Golan Heights.

Arab League permanent delegates, during an extraordinary session, called "on all countries to stop any financial aid capable of being used for settlements," the Palestinian delegate Mohammad Sobehi said, quoting a statement.

Earlier, Syria's ambassador to Egypt, Issa Darwish, called for a freezing of Arab-Israeli ties, pointing to a resolution at the June Arab summit agreeing such action if Israel did not make progress in the Middle East peace process.

"There is a settlement of the occupied Palestinian and Syrian territories and it is against international law and the principles of the peace process," Mr. Darwish told the extraordinary session.

The meeting was called at the request of Syria and the Palestinians to discuss Israel's policy of expanding settlements on Palestinian and Syrian territory.

Mr. Sobehi said Syria's call for a freeze in Arab-Israeli normalisation would be discussed by Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid and Arab foreign ministers in

Arafat and Mubarak review situation

Jakarta on the sidelines of an Organisation of the Islamic Conference ministerial meeting soon.

"These consultations will take place within the framework of the resolutions adopted at the Arab summit, where it was clear that we will steer away from Israel as long as it steers away from the peace process," Mr. Sobehi said.

Meanwhile, in Damascus, Islamic information ministers denounced Israel's expansion of Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories and on the Golan Heights.

The ministers also slammed Israel's "policies of repression and its blockade" of Palestinian territories.

But Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to further develop settlements in the Jordan Valley of the West Bank, saying the area will stay "part of Israel forever," Israeli public radio reported.

"The Jordan Valley will be an integral part of Israel whatever the definitive solution with the Palestinians," Mr. Netanyahu told members of the regional council of Maale Efrayim, the biggest Israeli settlement in the region.

Council Chairman David Levy said he had obtained

(Continued on page 7)

Euro-Arab Parliamentary Dialogue concludes with call on Israel to respect agreements and move to final status talks

Closer EU role in Mideast needs unified European stance — participants

By Farida Salfiti
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Arab and European parliamentarians on Sunday called on Israel to implement the agreements it has signed with the Palestinians, and to enter immediately negotiations on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The final communiqué issued at the end of a two-day Euro-Arab Parliamentary Dialogue also supported the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to establish an independent state with Arab East Jerusalem as its capital. It stressed the need to solve the Palestinian refugee problem according to relevant U.N. resolutions.

The final communiqué emphasised the need to reinvigorate the Middle East peace process, the

necessity of lifting the sanctions imposed on some Arab states, and enhancing cooperation in combating terrorism. Other issues addressed were the need to create a Mediterranean region free from weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear arms, and greater Euro-Arab cultural cooperation to promote better understanding.

The conference brought together members from 12

Arab, and 14 European national parliaments and the Strasbourg-based European Parliament. A representative from the Arab League also participated and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) attended as observer.

The final communiqué expressed the participants' concerns on the social and economic impacts of sanctions on the civilian population

of Iraq, Libya and Sudan.

Participants in the conference, the first in eight years held in an Arab country, welcomed the proposal of the Arab League to solve the Lockerbie case by allowing the trial of the two suspected Libyans in the Hague, and lifting the United Nations embargo on Libya.

(Continued on page 7)

Kabariti pays tribute to bedouins, opens Zarqa, Russeifa projects

Northern Badia celebrates King Hussein's birthday

NORTHERN BADIA (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti said Sunday that Jordan would always set a model for education in the Arab World and paid tribute to the bedouins as the shield of Jordan, serving their country through their allegiance and loyalty to the Hashemite Throne.

Mr. Kabariti, who was speaking to a rally in Northern Badia held on the occasion of His Majesty King Hussein's birthday, said that bedouins in general and northern bedouins in particular served their country in all fields in spite of hard conditions.

"We witness several positive changes in our badia

region. We have moved from instability to stability and from dependence to construction," he said. "The bedouins have sacrificed their lives on the soil of Palestine, Golan Heights and the Jordan Valley."

Attending the rally were Lower House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Sour, Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Environment Abdul Razzaq Tubeishat and other senior officials and notables and tribal leaders from Northern Badia.

Projects opened

Also on Sunday Mr. Kabariti visited Zarqa Governorate and opened a new warehouse for the Civil Servants Consumer Corporation and a tunnel linking Zarqa camp with the city's marketplace. The prime minister also opened a grain silo of the Ministry of Supply in Russeifa.



Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti talks to local leaders during a visit he paid to Northern Badia on Sunday (Petra photo)

ration and a tunnel linking Zarqa camp with the city's marketplace. The prime minister also opened a grain silo of the Ministry of Supply in Russeifa.

Palestinians reject settlers' offer to sell them apartments

Settlers return to Joseph's Tomb in Nablus

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Some Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have offered to sell their homes to Palestinians, who refused however, to "buy back their own land," an adviser to Yasser Arafat said Sunday.

"Settlers have proposed to sell several times over the past years and even during the past month but Palestinians don't agree to buy because they are ours," said Ahmad Al Tibi.

"I myself have been approached with offers, but I told them we will not buy back our own land, since the land the settlements are built on was taken from Palestinians," he said.

Settlers from Kiryat Arba, located outside the flash-point town of Hebron in the West Bank, were among those who offered to sell, Mr. Tibi said. But he did not specify how many offers were made.

Mr. Tibi, an Arab-Israeli adviser to Palestinian President Arafat, denied a report in the Arab daily Al Alam Al Yom that secret negotiations had been held in Rome between Israeli, Palestinian investors and representatives of Gulf monarchies to buy the settlements.

"To my knowledge, no such talks are taking place," he said.

"The Palestinians will not buy the settlements. We will demand in final status talks that Israel evacuate them. It is the Israeli government which should see to the financial demand of the settlers" for compensation, he said.

But Mr. Tibi said the Palestinians would not tear down the settlements once evacuated, and instead they could be used as "a good, partial solution to the question of Palestinian refugees."

"The refugees who wish to could move into the (evacuated) settlements rather than back to their homes in Israel," he said.

Some 140,000 Jews live in settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, along with 160,000 others living in Arab East Jerusalem. Al Alam Al Yom estimated the settlements are worth some \$10 billion.

The questions of Jewish settlements and the return of Palestinian refugees who lost their homes in Israel in 1948 are among the most sensitive in the autonomy accords between Israel and the Palestinians.

They are to be taken up in final status negotiations which are on hold after a single session last May.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu drew international condemnation last week for vowing during a visit to Jewish settlements on the occupied West Bank that they would grow and prosper "forever."

Mr. Arafat met last week with a delegation of settlers, including residents of Kiryat Arba, Mr. Tibi, who attended the meeting, said the issue of buying settlements was not raised.

Settlers return Jewish settlers on Sunday

returned to studies at Joseph's Tomb in the heart of autonomous Nablus for the first time since September violence left six Israeli soldiers and one Palestinian dead at the holy shrine.

The move came as Arab leaders convened in Cairo to discuss how to counter Israel's policy of settlement expansion.

Several Arab leaders have warned recently that Israel's decision to continue settlement construction could halt the Mideast peace process.

On Sunday, about 15 students with the side curls and skullcaps of observant Jews, arrived at Joseph's Tomb in an Israeli army truck and entered the seminary with a refrigerator.

Israeli paramilitary police in full battle gear stood guard inside the gate and Palestinian police with Kalashnikov assault rifles were posted outside.

Joseph's Tomb, the only part of the West Bank city of Nablus still under Israeli military control, is believed to be the grave site of the biblical figure Joseph. Israeli soldiers have remained there to protect the Jewish seminary students.

In September, six Israeli troops were killed protecting the Jewish shrine and seminary from Palestinians who marched on Joseph's Tomb and eventually ransacked it. One Palestinian was also killed in the violence.



Israeli soldiers stand guard on Sunday outside Joseph's Tomb in Nablus as religious Jewish settlers, many armed with automatic rifles, jump from an Israeli military truck and unload a refrigerator as they return to the site to start studying in the seminary there for the first time since the bloody clashes in September (Reuters photo)

Syrian boy recovers sight after operation in Jerusalem hospital

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A three-year-old Syrian boy born totally blind can now see clearly with one eye after surgery in Israel, considered by Syria to be an arch enemy.

"The operation was a complete success, the little boy can now see with one eye and will be able to have a normal education," said David Ben Ezra, head of the paediatric ophthalmology department at Jerusalem's Hadassa Hospital.

He said the boy and his mother returned to Syria several days ago after five months of intensive treatment following surgery which gradually restored sight to one eye.

Dr. Ben Ezra said the operation involved two stages: the repair of a deformity on the surface of the eyes which had caused damage to optic nerves,

and then the easing of pressure on the eyes which had caused the patient constant pain.

"In addition to the blindness, the child also suffered from hyperactivity which was caused by the pressure on the eyes," Dr. Ben Ezra said. "Before the surgery he used to jump and run around all the time and was incapable of relating to his environment."

Throughout the boy's stay in Israel his mother stayed in Arab East Jerusalem, and Dr. Ben Ezra said neither mother nor child had shown any signs of fear during their stay in "enemy territory."

And he added that there had been a regular flow of Syrian visitors to Hadassa Hospital over the past few years, despite the tense relations between the two countries and, the

breakdown of peace talks in February.

"The sick people arrive in Jordan, where colleagues with whom we have very good relations pass them onto our hospital which, in certain fields, is among the most advanced in the world," said Dr. Ben Ezra.

However, the doctor said that within the past few months his hospital's relations with the Jordanian contacts had cooled and that the flow of Syrian patients had dried up.

"Unfortunately, the increased tension between Israel and its neighbours has also had a negative impact on cooperation with our Jordanian colleagues over the past four months, and during this time we have not received any new Syrian patients," he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

17 burned to death in Syrian bus accident

DAMASCUS (AP) — Seventeen people burned to death and 20 others were injured when their bus blew a tire, overturned and caught fire, a newspaper said Sunday. The Al Baath newspaper said the accident occurred Saturday on the Aleppo-Hamaka highway in northern Syria. Eleven women and six children were killed. Last Wednesday, 13 people were killed and four wounded when a mini-bus carrying school teachers blew a tire and collided head-on with a truck on a highway south of Damascus.

4 Americans bring medicine to Iraq

BAGHDAD (AP) — Four Americans have brought a donation of medicine to Iraq, defying a U.S. ban on dealings with the country for the third time this year. The Chicago-based group, Voices in the Wilderness, arrived on Friday with \$10,000 worth of medicine, which is in short supply after six years of U.N. sanctions. Although food and medicine are exempt from the embargo, Iraq's oil exports are cut off and the government says it does not have the cash to pay for supplies. The Americans plan to stage a four-day fast in front of the U.S. interest section in Baghdad to demonstrate their opposition to the use of economic sanctions against Iraq, said Betram Sacks, a member of the group. The group also sent representatives to Iraq in March and August.

French defence minister visits Qatar

DOHA (AFP) — French Defence Minister Charles Millon met with the emir of Qatar after arriving here Sunday to hold talks with senior Qatari officials, and inspect a French fighter squadron, diplomats and officials said. Mr. Millon handed the emir, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, a message from French President Jacques Chirac on "bilateral cooperation between the two friendly countries," the official Qatari news agency said. The defence minister will also inspect a squadron of French Mirage F-1s and 100 airmen and support crew who were deployed here Nov. 20 to train for one month with Qatari forces under a 1994 defence pact. Mr. Millon will travel later Sunday to Abu Dhabi to take part in festivities marking the 25th anniversary of the founding of the United Arab Emirates. France also signed a defence cooperation agreement with the UAE. In January 1995 and signed one with Kuwait in August 1992.

Netanyahu appoints controversial advisor

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has provoked a storm in Israeli academic circles by appointing a controversial scientific advisor known for his strong views on the Palestinians. Mr. Netanyahu appointed Professor Israel Khanukoglu, a biologist who teaches at Samaria College in the West Bank settlement of Ariel, at the end of last week, causing an immediate backlash. "I was furious when I learned about the appointment of Khanukoglu because of his views on the Palestinians," Oren Regev, a chemistry professor at Beersheva University in southern Israel, told AFP. "My colleagues in the science faculty are just as scandalised as I am," he added. Since being appointed to the post, Mr. Khanukoglu has repeated his theory that "most Palestinians originate from Arab countries. As far as genetic defects and the biosynthesis of steroids and hormones are concerned, my field of expertise, it is possible to say that the most widespread illness in the Jabaliya region (of the Gaza Strip) comes from Syria. People from Jabaliya, who today make up the majority (of Palestinians) in the region, originate from Syria where they came from around 100 years ago." The biologist said the Israeli government is responsible for creating a Palestinian national identity. "We have transformed a large group of Arabs who live here into a people," he said. Many Israeli scientists accuse Khanukoglu of injecting politics into the rigours of science. "It makes me think of a certain regime during a sinister period when these kind of theories were dominant," an Israeli researcher, who wished to remain anonymous, told the Maariv newspaper in an allusion to the Third Reich.

Ramos seeks clemency for Filipinos in S. Arabia

MANILA (AFP) — Philippine President Fidel Ramos has written to Saudi Arabia's King Fahd seeking clemency for Filipinos imprisoned in the kingdom, the presidential palace here said Sunday. The appeal is made in a letter carried by Vice President Joseph Estrada, who was scheduled to leave Sunday evening for a 10-day tour of the Middle East, including a meeting with King Fahd, the palace said in a statement. Mr. Ramos also thanked the king for his "humanitarian grant of royal clemency" to more than 100 Filipino workers jailed in Saudi Arabia and have since been reunited with their families. The statement did not say how many Filipinos are still in Saudi Arabian prisons.

JOB VACANCIES

A non-profit organization is seeking to recruit professional staff for the following positions:

1. Executive Director

Responsibilities: Lead, plan, organize, design, manage and control all phases of the organization and its development into a sustainable microfinance institution.

Qualifications: Bachelor degree in analytical field-Master degree preferred; ability to train and manage team; minimum three years experience in Community Development and prior management experience; knowledge of computers; excellent interpersonal and analytical skills; and demonstrable expertise with economics and numeral ability required. Fluent in English and Arabic also required.

2. Accountant

Qualifications: Bachelor degree in Accounting; knowledge of accounting aspects, statistics and budgets; minimum one year experience in similar positions; excellent organizational skills, and ability to work in a team. Fluency in English and Arabic required.

If interested, please send your CV to Fax 612902 no later than Dec. 5, 1996.

112 Cairo buildings to be torn down

CAIRO (AP) — The housing minister has ordered the demolition of 112 newly built apartment buildings after finding they were badly constructed and beyond repair, a spokesman said Sunday.

The investigation followed the deaths of at least 64 people in the collapse of a Cairo building that was later found to have been poorly built and improperly renovated.

Minister Mohammed Ibrahim Suleiman said the new buildings, which had not yet been inhabited, will be rebuilt at the expense of the original contractors but by other companies, the Al Ahram newspaper reported Sunday.

"What I have seen is a

disaster," Mr. Suleiman said. "Human souls are more important than any cost and there is no other alternative solution (other than demolition) that will guarantee safety 100 per cent. It will cost more to fix them than to rebuild them."

A housing ministry spokesman, Hisham Amin, confirmed the report and noted that some of the 112 buildings were not yet finished.

Al Ahram said that investigation found that the 112 blocks, with 1,548 units, were constructed between 1990 and 1993 in Qataniya, a new suburb northeast of Cairo. They were ordered demolished because the foundations and supporting columns

lacked the necessary amount of iron and cement.

Mr. Suleiman also ordered the evacuation of 41 apartment buildings in Nasr City, near Qataniya, after investigations showed they were built on soft soil that was causing them to tilt, Al Ahram said.

Tests are being conducted to see if the buildings, with 943 units, can be fixed or if they will need to be demolished. They were handed over to their owners in 1993.

Cairo has a serious shortage of housing for a rapidly expanding population, and some construction companies have been increasing their profits by producing sub-standard buildings.

Sudan hails Saudi role

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudanese Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail has hailed Saudi Arabia's role in promoting Islam throughout the world and said there had been positive developments in bilateral relations.

"Sudan acknowledges the leading role by Saudi Arabia for disseminating Islam in Africa, Asia and Europe," Mr. Ismail was quoted as saying by the official Sudan News Agency SUNA on Sunday.

Mr. Ismail, speaking at a briefing on Saturday, said there had been "positive developments" between Sudan and Saudi Arabia and also with Iran, which led a recent initiative to reconcile Sudan and its African neighbour Uganda.

JORDAN TELEVISION Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:05Muppet Show
14:30Comedy — Dad's Army
15:00Varieties —
L. Integrale
15:30Doc. — Travelling
Gourmet
16:00Documentary:
Natures Inventions
16:30Comedy — Hey Dad
17:00News Flash
17:01Destiny Ridge
18:00 Magazine — Cinq Sur
Cinq
19:00Le Journal
19:15Magazine — Cinq Sur
Cinq
19:30News Headlines
20:00 Documentary — Disaster
Chronicle
20:30Cinema. Cinema
21:10The Lazarus Man
22:00News in English
22:25Best Seller
23:15Police drama — The
Knock

PRAYER TIMES

04:52Fajr
06:13(Sunrise) Duha
11:25Dhuhr
14:14Asr
16:36Maghreb
17:57Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church.

Sweifeh, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.

Amman International Church Tel. 827126

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology. Moderate weather conditions will prevail with skies partly cloudy and winds southeasterly moderate. In-Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Aqaba.....14/29
Deserts.....08/22
Jordan Valley.....14/28

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 18. Aqaba 28 Humidity readings: Amman 53 per cent. Aqaba 34 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Hanna Mansour.....750197

Dr. Nidal Al Dahleh.....827195

Dr. Said Tawfiq.....788285

Dr. Afif Shukri.....898863

Ferdows pharmacy.....778336

Al Asema pharmacy.....637055

Nairokha pharmacy.....623672

Al Salam pharmacy.....636730

Yaacob pharmacy.....644945

Shmeisani pharmacy.....637660

Nairokha pharmacy.....847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Tamneh.....250891

Al Quds pharmacy.....(—)

ZARQA:

Civil Defence Department.....661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue.....630341

Civil Defence Emergency.....199

Rescue Police.....192.621111.657777

Fire Brigade.....617101

Black Bank.....775121

Highway Police.....843402

Traffic Police.....896390

Public Security Dept.....630321

Hotel Complaints.....605800

Price Complaints.....661176

Water & Sewerage Complaints.....887467

Amman Municipality Complaints.....787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance).....121

Overseas Calls.....010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs.....623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs.....661101

Jordan Television.....773111

Radio Jordan.....774111

Water Authority.....680100

J. Electricity Authority.....815615

Electric Power Co.....636381

RJ Flight Information.....08-533200

Queen Alia Int. Airport.....08-533200

Shmeisani Hospital.....669131

University Hospital.....845845

Al-Muasher Hospital.....667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali.....666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali.....664164/66

Italian, Al-Muhajreen.....777101/3

Al-Bashir.....775111/26

Army, Marka.....891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital.....602240/50

Amal Hospital.....674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery.....865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital.....(09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital.....(09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital.....109986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital.....(09)990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital.....(02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital.....(02)272725

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital.....(02)247100

Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)533200-5, where it should always be verified.

Information on other flights are supplied on phone (08 152700)

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:15Sunna (RJ)

08:35Jeddah (RJ)

08:55Damascus (RJ)

09:45New Delhi (RJ)

09:50Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

10:05Beirut (RJ)

16:20Cairo (RJ)

16:25London (RJ)

16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

21:15 Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

21:45 Jakarta, Abu Dhabi (add) (RJ)

03:40 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

Other Flights

05:00Khartoum (SD)

09:30Cairo (MS)

11:30Doha (Q7)

12:40Bahrain (GF)

15:05Vienna (OS)

21:00Paris, Damascus (AF)

21:40Tel Aviv (LY)

22:45Athens, Beirut (OA)

00:30London (BA)

01:20 Amsterdam, Damascus (KL)

05:05London (KJ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

09:20Aqaba (RW)

20:50Aqaba (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

06:20Beirut (RJ)

11:00Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)

12:15Cairo (RJ)

Home News

Jordan Times, Monday, December 2, 1996

Child dies of food poisoning in Irbid

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Police and forensic experts are investigating the cause of death of a 6-year old child who was admitted to an Irbid hospital Friday on suspicions of food poisoning, police and hospital sources said.

According to a source at Ibn Nafis Hospital, where Hazem Zakaria, and his two brothers Ismael, 7, and Yahya, 9, from the northern part of Irbid, had been admitted Friday, "authorities took food samples taken from the toddlers' stomachs for laboratory tests."

The three children were admitted to hospital after complaining of vomiting and diarrhoea for the past five days, the hospital official Sunday

told the Jordan Times.

"Their family told us that they had eaten sandwiches at school five days ago which induced the food poisoning but their family brought them to us three days later," the hospital official said.

Hazem, who was admitted in a comatose state, died the day after his hospital admission, while his two brothers who suffered from milder food poisoning were treated," the hospital official said.

The source confirmed that Ismael and Yahya were discharged from the hospital on Sunday after being treated in the emergency room after undergoing three days of observation.

Initial police reports had quoted the father of

the three children as saying that he rushed his children to the hospital as they were suffering from food poisoning after eating sandwiches at school. The report gave no further details.

Police contacted by the Jordan Times Sunday confirmed the incident but refused to give any further details and said they were investigating the incident.

Last year, 22 Irbid students from Ajnadeed School were treated in Irbid hospitals also complaining of food poisoning, police reports said at the time.

The report said then that the students had ingested expired products purchased from the school cafeteria.

Shbeilat pledges allegiance to King, calls for continued human rights efforts

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — It was of little surprise that the streets leading to the Professional Associations Complex were blocked by cars on Saturday evening, Leith Shbeilat, the outspoken opposition figure, was expected to make his first public appearance in Amman at a reception held at the complex in his honour.

And people came in hundreds, wanting mainly to see how this President of the Engineers Association, sentenced to a three-year prison term last February on charges of lese majeste, and then pardoned early last month by His Majesty King Hussein, would react after an extended detention.

However, it was a long time before Mr. Shbeilat took the floor at the crowded hall of the association's complex. President of the Professional Associations, Freedoms Committee Ziad Matameh spoke first. He called for the enhancement of democracy and the application of human rights through the "release of all political detainees."

In a short speech customary of these occasions, Mr. Matameh urged the crowd to fight normalisation of relations with Israel and ended his speech with a quote pertaining to Zionism taken from one of Mr. Shbeilat's lectures.

Spokesperson for Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement) Ibrahim Ghoshel, also tackled the subject of Zionism and imperialism. "Our battle is with Zionism colonisation which doesn't discriminate between Jordanians and



Leith Shbeilat

Palestinians. The [Jordanian] government should release all political detainees; Arafat's authority as well. But don't forget that the Zionist prisons hold 5,000 [Palestinian] detainees."

Some participants applauded, others were so-called, but when Vice President of the Engineers Association Husni Abu Ghaidia invited Mr. Shbeilat to address the assembly all movement came to a sudden halt. Participants froze and fixed their gaze on Shbeilat. The continuous movements of messengers bringing coffee and sweets were momentarily paralysed. The only dynamism in the room was the arresting presence of Leith Shbeilat.

Mr. Shbeilat, wearing a dark blue suit and tie, took the microphone and began to extend his gratitude to all those who supported him. He started by thanking human rights activists for their "diligent work and strenuous efforts deployed for promoting public freedoms," and then praised what he described as the "honourable stand" taken by other political fighters in the field as well as poets.

In his eulogy to the press, Mr. Shbeilat mentioned the weekly press only. But most thanks and appreciation went to all Jordanians who he said were like brothers to him.

"Sometimes, one discovers that he has brothers who are not blood-related," he said, referring to all those who backed him during his detention regardless of their backgrounds and origins.

Mr. Shbeilat, who used the first person plural when he was talking about his cause, did not forget to talk about Zionism either. He said that all arrests based on lese majeste charges began subsequent to Jordan's signing of the Wadi Araba treaty with Israel in October 1994. He urged those present at the reception to fight normalisation with the Jewish state.

Quashing speculations that he would demonstrate ingratitude to the King, who personally accompanied him from Suwaqa prison to Mr. Shbeilat's mother's house on the day of his release, Mr. Shbeilat said: "God only knows that opposition in this country fully recognises the status of the King and respects him. It acknowledges the role of the palace, symbol of stability and sovereignty."

"Leith would never answer [such a] kind Royal gesture with ingratitude and would never reply to Royal care and attention with impudence as though impudence was one of our principles," Mr. Shbeilat said.

He declined to address other subjects although he was asked to discuss the need for amending the constitution.

Regent states satisfaction with European initiatives towards peace process

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Sunday expressed Jordan's satisfaction with European initiatives in support of the Middle East peace process as well as its intent to promote global peace in line with the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration regarding security and cooperation.

Speaking during a meeting at the Royal Court with visiting Minister for European Affairs and International Trade Ole Norrback, from Finland, the Regent said that the Middle East is in need of specialised concepts which guarantee security and prosperity.

He welcomed the Finnish role in promoting peace, cooperation and security and affirmed national interest in bilateral relations in terms of trade and investments.

The Regent described Jordanian policy as based on principled stands in support of a comprehensive regional peace and that the Kingdom appreciates European initiatives towards the attainment of such a peace.

Mr. Norrback stated that his country backs Jordan's role in the peace process as well as the Kingdom's efforts to affiliate with the European Union and the World Trade Organisation.

Also Sunday, Mr. Norrback met with Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Hashem Dab-

bas and discussed prospects for Jordanian-Finnish cooperation in the energy and mineral resource fields.

The Finnish official maintained that his visit to Jordan was aimed at exploring all areas where Finland can contribute to Jordanian development projects.

He said that Finland appreciated Jordanian receptiveness to world trade as well as its encouragement of foreign firms' investments in the Kingdom and that Finnish businessmen are eager to initiate projects in energy and mineral resources with their Jordanian counterparts.

Mr. Norrback said that the new Jordanian electricity law encourages Finnish firms to participate in the Kingdom's

electricity and energy projects.

Dr. Dabbas briefed the Finnish minister on the Jordanian energy situation, areas where investments can be made and incentives offered by the Jordanian government to attract investors.

The two officials also explored prospects for the exploitation of oil shale and solar and wind power to produce energy as well as a Finnish-Jordanian joint exploration



for mineral resources like gold and copper in addition to oil and natural gas.

Minister opens UAE cultural centre

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Education Munther Masri Sunday opened a cultural centre adjacent to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Embassy in Jordan and expressed his hope that the centre would contribute to further strengthening bilateral ties.

The centre's inauguration was intended to mark the 30th anniversary of UAE's President Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan's assumption of office in the Gulf state of Abu Dhabi and the 25th anniversary of the founding of the UAE.

Dr. Masri expressed his happiness in joining the ceremony and stated that the centre's library provides a wealth of information about the UAE as well as the other countries belonging to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

He further stated that the centre was bound to further bolster cultural ties between Jordan and the Gulf states.

Centre Director Zuhdi Khalib described the library as housing reference books and historic documents depicting a cultural, social and economic perspective of the UAE and the GCC countries.

Political parties engage in debate as to future role

By Christina Schlegl
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The unification of political parties in the Kingdom is urgently needed in order to increase efficiency and public acceptance, was the common sentiment expressed Sunday at a workshop entitled "Political Parties In Jordan".

Various speakers at the conference commented that the national proliferation of political parties should be reduced from 24 (the current number) to about 5 major coalitions which might better lessen public confusion, Director General of Al-Urdun al-Jadid Research Centre (UJRC), Hani Hourani told the Jordan Times.

The two-day workshop, held at the Royal Cultural Centre, is the second covering this topic, the first having been held in June, 1994, in which the various concerned organisations, according to Mr. Hourani, showed greater interest.

In his opening address, he commented upon the timeliness of a more efficient role for political parties in Jordan.

"We have to elaborate a national agenda," he said, "to enhance the parties' status and their role in parliamentary life."

Mr. Hourani explained that the main emphasis of the workshop is to encourage party preparations for

the 1997 elections and thus to help those attending increase their representation in Parliament.

"This workshop," Mr. Hourani, who is also co-organiser of the conference together with the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAF), said, "is now of greater importance than it was two years ago at which time parties tended towards a future optimism."

"Party life in Jordan," he continued, "seems to be stalled. Its members are confused and disappointed by the current situation."

This confusion, Mr. Hourani explained, is compounded by a lack of members as well as a public perception of uncertainty as regards the future of party activity in Jordan.

A University of Yarmouk study covering citizen opinions towards the performance and role of political parties revealed that the population has little confidence in parties, is not aware of their supposed role in democratic life and, moreover, think that parties are government influenced.

A total of 79.8 per cent of the respondents felt that parties are not initiating public contact and 64.3 per cent admitted confusion induced by the sheer variety of political groupings which they felt effectively paralysed political enfranchisement.

Another 64.8 per cent of those polled felt that parties

are directed by individuals rather than consensus and 63.3 per cent felt that political freedom is non-existent in individual groups.

In terms of the relationship between the government and political parties, the same study delineated 62 per cent of the respondents as fearing government rejection as a party member.

Reports presented by Hakam Khair from the Al-Watan party and Issa Otaum from the Al-Ahd party vocalised similar problems.

In his speech, Mr. Otaum concluded that there is a mutual responsibility between the government and political parties to overcome current obstacles which, he felt, currently hinder the flow of democratic process.

"The government," he said, "must eliminate legal obstacles, whereas the parties must review their [respective] programmes within a constitutional framework."

In view of some parties' discontent with existing election laws, based on the "one-person, one-vote" system, Mr. Hourani said, the UJRC suggests the establishment of a committee in favour of amendments to that legislation.

"The revised law," he said, "should be a combination of the current law and the opposition's demand for the implementation of a

revised voting system in which the voter not only votes for an individual but is also free to state his/her preferences for certain apportioned seats from within."

Such a list, Mr. Hourani claimed, would allow the population to vote for "political trends" rather than for "traditional leaders."

The present electoral law is temporary as it has not yet been sanctioned by the government, he explained.

"The last session of the current Parliament will hopefully look into the matter, but we do not have the necessary time to reach an agreement prior to the upcoming elections," Mr. Hourani said.

He also voiced hope that this problem will be tackled today at a "round table discussion" in the workshop.

Mr. Hourani described the current situation as a "transition period" where political parties must refrain from their stereotyped, traditional interest of being ideologically polarised and instead come up with realistic programmes giving resolution to daily problems.

An aggregate of 18 political parties, out of the total 24, are taking part in the workshop which hopes to close with a solution for common problems which parties currently face. Conference Chairman Anis Muf'asher concluded.

What's Going On

FILMS

* Two films entitled "Fanfan" and "Les metamorphoses du regard" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh at 8:30 p.m.

CHRISTMAS SHOW

* "Special show and sale of Christmas crafts at the Jordan Crafts Centre (Alaydi), Jabal Amman, Second Circle (Tel. 644555), until Dec. 31.

LECTURE

* "Small Questions, Large Answers: An Approach to Poetry" by Dr. Nicholas Linfield at the British Council, Jabal Amman at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Plastic art week activities at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Dec. 12.

* Works on the life of André Malraux at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 24.

* Works by Arab artists residing in Spain Zafer Adnan, Issam Ta'i, and Hakeem Sa'di at Orfali Art Gallery, Umm Utthaina, until Dec. 3.

* Works by Jalal Arif and Larisa Najar at Institut Ceramiques, Jabal Amman, until Dec. 6.

* Works by Syrian artist Mustafa Ali at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens St. until Dec. 5.

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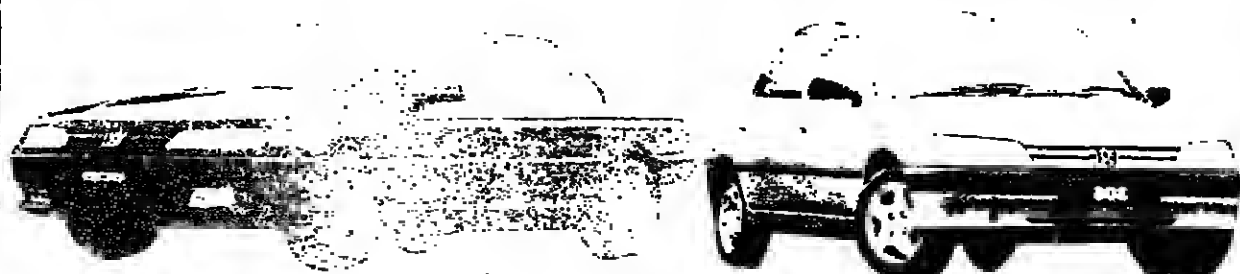
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Algerian court sentences 23 fugitives to death

PARIS (Agencies) — An Algerian court sentenced 23 Muslim fundamentalist fugitives to death at the weekend, the official Algerian News Agency (APS) said Sunday.

The court sitting in the town of Medea, 60 kilometres southwest of Algiers, Saturday condemned the 23 in absentia, on charges including "belonging to an armed movement, undermining state security, taking part in premeditated murder, sabotage and arson of economic units and educational establishments."

Eight fundamentalists appearing in court charged with helping and giving financial support to an armed group, and "apology for terrorism," were jailed for between three and five years.

APS said the court had a further 142 cases to judge, most linked to "criminality" — an official Algerian term for actions by armed Muslim rebels seeking to overthrow the authorities.

Algerian authorities have

been locked in conflict with Muslim fundamentalists since early in 1992. Violence erupted in the north African country after the authorities cancelled a general election in which Islamists had swept to a commanding lead in the first round.

Meanwhile, Algerian state media has rejected charges that the overwhelming passage of a referendum banning Islamic parties and giving the president more power was a sham.

State radio said a 14-hour delay in reporting the referendum results was due to a "quirk" in the "obsolete" communications system of the Interior Ministry.

Thursday's referendum to revise Algeria's constitution was approved by 86 per cent of the voters, the government had announced. It said 14 per cent voted against it, with a total voter turnout of 79 per cent.

Opposition parties and many Algerian journalists disagreed, suggesting turnout figures and results were

fabricated.

The Front for Socialist Forces (FFS) had claimed the lapse between the closing of polls and announcement of results was due to disagreement within the government over how high to set official figures.

"The fact they waited the whole night is proof the government is in disarray," said Seddik Debaili, secretary general of the party.

Said Sadi, whose Rally for Culture and Democracy Party watched the election from outside polling centres in several cities, estimated a nationwide turnout of only 30 per cent of Algeria's 16 million voters.

"With fraud of this scope, (President Liamine) Zeroual is sending a message" that he will do what he wants, Mr. Sadi said.

Algerian Radio Channel 3 claimed the referendum's strong backing was due to the popularity of Mr. Zeroual, who won 61 per cent of the votes in last year's presidential elections, and the backing of two candi-

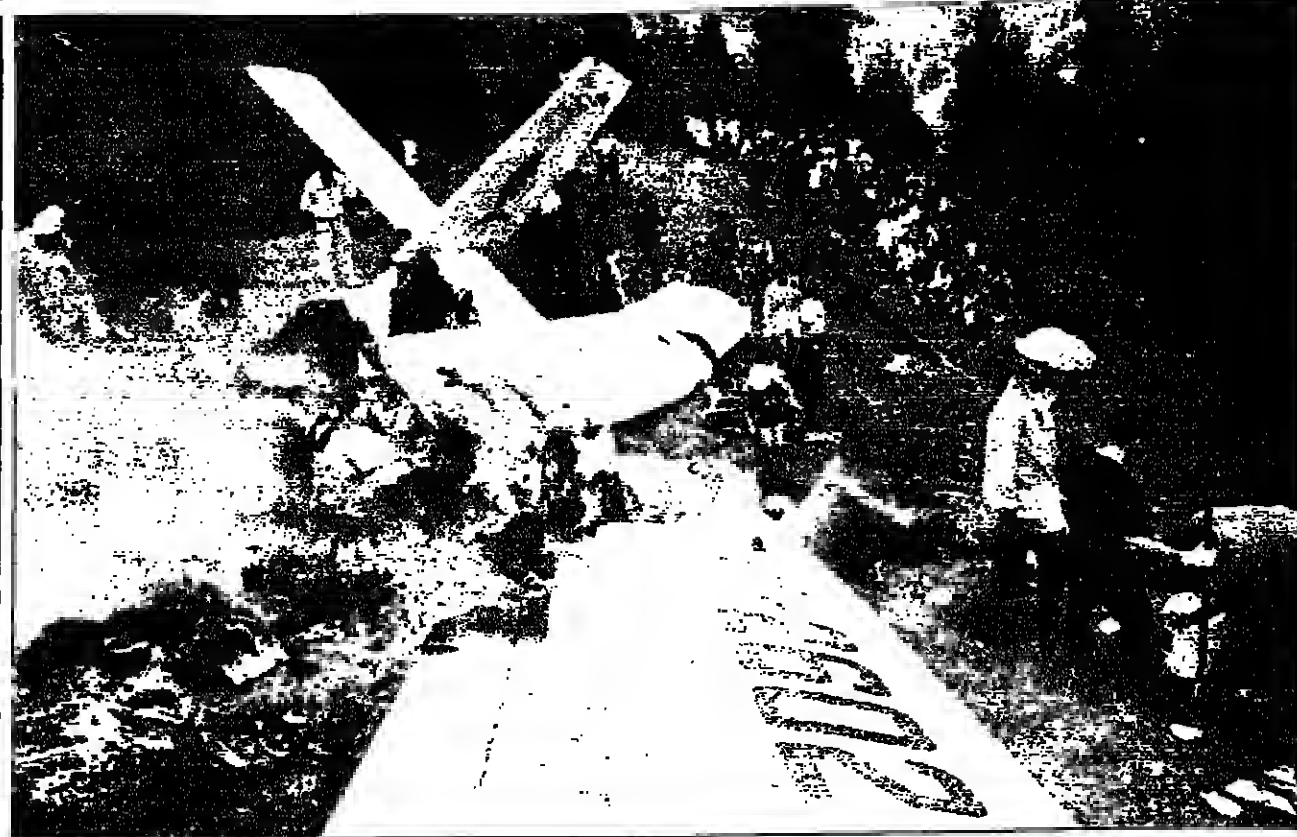
dates who had finished behind Mr. Zeroual.

The radio said the influence of Mr. Sadi, who also ran for president, was "limited" to two cities, and that the referendum's success was a "major failure" on a national scale for the FFS.

The proposal bans political parties based on religion, language and regionalism, a reference to Algeria's substantial Berber community, which long has worked for official recognition of its language.

The government says the ban and other amendments to the constitution are aimed at stabilising the country after nearly five years of an Islamic insurgency that has taken more than 60,000 lives.

But Algerian and foreign analysts say the changes, which include creation of a new upper chamber of parliament, are designed to enable Mr. Zeroual to block unwelcome political initiatives.



Rescue workers check the wreckage of a commuter plane from Aces Airline after it plowed into a mountain on the outskirts of Medellin, shortly after takeoff Saturday. The crash left 14 people dead, including two tourists from the Netherlands on their way to the Bahia Solano beach resort. A 23-year old man survived the crash and is in critical condition in a local hospital (Reuter photo)

2 foreigners among 14 dead in Colombia plane crash

MEDELLIN, Colombia (R) — A small commuter plane ploughed into a mountain on the outskirts of this city in northwest Colombia Saturday, killing 14 of the 15 people aboard including two foreigners, authorities said.

Civil aviation officials said the plane, a Canadian-built twin otter belonging to Colombia's Aces Airline, crashed into the tree-lined Padre Amaya mountain southwest of the city and burst into flames shortly

after takeoff from the Enrique Olaya Herrera Airport. It had been headed for the Bahia Solano Beach resort on Colombia's Pacific Coast and was carrying 13 passengers and two crew members when it went down for unknown reasons in fair weather, the officials said.

"We don't know what happened, all we know is that it crashed," one civil aviation official told reporters. "We've been in touch with

the control tower and apparently the pilot never reported any emergency," he added.

Two survivors of the crash were rushed to Medellin's Las Vegas Hospital with multiple fractures and burns over up to 90 per cent of their bodies. But one of them, identified as 15-year-old Olga Lucia Moreno, died of her injuries shortly afterward, hospital officials said.

The only other survivor, Pedro Rafael Rojas, 23, was in critical condition, the

officials said.

A passenger list released late Saturday included Rene Groessewood and Maria Vaspaassen, both of the Netherlands.

Olaya Herrera has been described by pilots as among Latin America's most dangerous airports. It is nestled into a relatively narrow valley ringed by steep mountains and access to its landing strip can force larger aircraft to engage in a series of corkscrew-like turns.

Afghan villagers report heavy civilian casualties in latest fighting

KALAKAN, Afghanistan (API) — Refugees fleeing the fighting north of the beleaguered capital Sunday reported at least 40 civilians either killed or wounded in a blistering artillery exchange between the Taliban and their enemies.

The battle raged along the front-line some 20 kilometres north of Kabul.

Residents of Karabab and Stalef, two villages controlled by the alliance, fled to nearby Kalakan during a lull in the shelling Sunday.

They said at least 40 civilians had been killed or wounded in the past few days and that most of the villages were abandoned.

"Bodies were lying on the streets, there was nobody to bury dead, nobody to help

the wounded," said Alim, a 47-year-old villager who had fled Stalef with his family.

Many of the refugees fled on foot to Kabul, trying to hitch rides with the few vehicles that passed.

When one truck stopped, desperate villagers climbed over each other to get on board.

The Taliban, which now controls about two-thirds of Afghanistan including Kabul, has pushed further northward since launching an offensive one week ago.

The northern alliance, led by warlord Rashid Dostum and ousted military chief Ahmad Shah Massoud, have tried to regain lost territory with blistering artillery attacks. But the Taliban

has held on to the newly captured villages of Sarajhoja and Karakan.

Taliban commanders said they will continue their march northwards, aiming to capture the strategically important town and air-base of Baghran, about 60 kilometres north of Kabul.

"We are using our planes and heavy artillery to prepare the ground for a new attack," said Mullah Khan Mohammed Akhund, a Taliban commander.

A band of former religious students and clerics, the Taliban has imposed a strict version of Islamic Law that forbids women from working and forces men to pray five times a day.

Moldovans vote in presidential election

CHISINAU (R) — Moldovans began voting Sunday in the second round of the former Soviet republic's first multi-candidate presidential election, which pits President Mircea Snegur against the leftist speaker of parliament.

Mr. Snegur, 56, president since independence in 1991, took first place in the Nov. 17 first round with 39 per cent of the vote. He has been endorsed by a nationalist candidate who wants closer ties with ethnic kin in Romania.

But the president faces stiff opposition. Both the Communists and Prime Minister Andrei Sangheli, who was knocked out in the first round, have backed Parliament Chairman Petru Lucinschi. Mr. Lucinschi took 28 per cent of the vote two weeks ago.

Mr. Snegur has strong support in the countryside, but the deep economic crisis of the past five years has fuelled resentment.

"I'm for Lucinschi," said Valya as she swept autumn leaves from the pavement in front of her ageing single-storey house in the centre of the capital, Chisinau, early Sunday.

"My pension's only 50 lei (about \$10) a month and I don't always get it. My children don't get their wages, our two-year-old is hungry," she added. "We need a change."

Mr. Lucinschi, also 56 and like Snegur once a top Soviet Communist, says Mr. Snegur might use police to help him influence the voting, which is being observed by international monitors.

Last March, Mr. Snegur tried to sack the defence minister for corruption but Mr. Sangheli opposed him, causing a menacing split in the army. The Constitutional Court ruled against Mr. Snegur, who plans to sack Mr. Sangheli's government if he wins Sunday.

There was no sign of unusual security or tension in central Chisinau as polls opened at 8 a.m. (0600 GMT).

The president remains popular with many of Moldova's 4.3 million people, despite their economic troubles.

Mr. Snegur has pledged to press on with market reforms — but wants greater presidential powers to do it. He dismisses fears among the one-third Russian-speaking minority that closer ties with Bucharest could lead to union. Soviet dictator Josef Stalin carved Moldova from mainly Romanian territory in World War II.

Northern Irish guerrilla ceasefire report denied

LONDON (R) — The IRA's political allies dismissed as "rubbish" a report in Britain's Mail On Sunday newspaper that the Irish guerrilla force will announce a new ceasefire in two weeks.

The paper had quoted sources from the Sinn Fein political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) as saying the declaration would be made before Christmas after all "active service units" in Europe had been briefed.

Sinn Fein said the story was pure fabrication. "We have no knowledge of any imminent IRA ceasefire," said a party spokesman from Londonderry, Northern Ireland's second city.

British Prime Minister John Major said Thursday the IRA, which wants to end British rule and see the province united with the Irish republic, would have to call a credible and verifiable ceasefire before Sinn Fein could be admitted to five-month-old peace negotiations.

He rejected Sinn Fein demands that it be granted automatic and immediate inclusion in the talks if the IRA called a new truce and said the guerrillas would have to prove the ceasefire was not a tactical ploy by renouncing violence for good.

The Mail On Sunday said the decision to call a ceasefire had been reached three

days ago, it said senior IRA officials were visiting units in Ireland, the British mainland and across Europe with instructions to lay down their arms.

The same procedure was carried out before the last IRA ceasefire just over two years ago, it said.

The Irish government has voiced concern that a new IRA truce would not grant Sinn Fein automatic entry to the talks and the issue is expected to dominate talks when Irish Prime Minister John Bruton meets with Mr. Major in London on Dec. 9.

Martin McGuinness, Sinn Fein's chief negotiator, said Friday the IRA would reject Mr. Major's terms if he approached them to restore

the 17-month truce the guerrillas ended in February with bomb attacks in London.

Since then the guerrillas have staged further attacks on the British mainland, in Germany and in Northern Ireland itself.

On Friday, a huge bomb was found hidden in a field close to British army barracks near the border town of Armagh.

No group has claimed responsibility, but Northern Ireland police said it contained more than a tonne of explosive and was primed and ready for use.

Mr. Major's office had no comment on the Mail's ceasefire story.

Jiang calls for deeper understanding with Pakistan for peace in Asia

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — China's President Jiang Zemin, who arrived here from India Sunday, said his visit would promote deeper understanding and stronger cooperation with Pakistan in the interest of peace and stability in Asia.

"It has been proved that China-Pakistan friendship not only conforms to the fundamental interests of the two countries and peoples, but also contributes to the maintenance of peace and stability of South Asia and Asia at large," Mr. Jiang said.

He said he was convinced that his four-day visit "will be helpful for ... deeper mutual understanding ... which will lay a good foundation for us to bring the China-Pakistan friendship into the dynamic 21st century."

China and Pakistan established diplomatic ties 45 years ago.

In an airport statement he said that relations between the two Asian neighbours "have stood the test of time and developed steadily, thanks to the joint efforts" of the two governments.

Earlier the Chinese leader was warmly received by his Pakistani counterpart Farooq Ahmad Leghari when he flew in to Islamabad from New Delhi.

A 21-gun salvo heralded his arrival, escorted by two formations of Pakistan Air Force F-16 fighter jets, while a small girl anired in traditional Pakistani dress presented a bouquet of flowers to Mr. Jiang.

Outside the airport decorated with welcome banners, a group of dancers performed Punjab's popular "Bhangra" dance.

The Chinese president, who is leading a large delegation which includes Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen and other senior government officials, will hold wide ranging discussion with Mr. Leghari on bilateral relations, regional and international issues in the afternoon, officials said.

"China has played an important role in the economic development of Pakistan and the two countries have very close cooperation in the cultural, defence, economic and

political fields," Mr. Leghari said.

He said the visit would further strengthen cooperation between the two countries.

Mr. Jiang, who is the first foreign dignitary to visit Pakistan since the dismissal of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's government early last month, will also meet cateraker Prime Minister Malik Meraj Khalid, who is to oversee the new elections scheduled for Feb. 3.

The two countries will sign three agreements relating to cooperation on environmental protection, the continuation of Pakistan's consulate in Hong Kong when the territory returns to Chinese sovereignty next year and the opening of a Pakistani consulate in Shanghai, officials said.

The Chinese president will make a policy statement at a special session of the Senate (upper house) Monday. Official sources said he was likely to explain salient features of the Chinese policy in South Asia.

NASA cancels shuttle space walks

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (R) — The jammed batch on the space shuttle Columbia confounded engineers and forced NASA to cancel the mission's two space walks, officials said Saturday.

"EVAs (space walks) are not going to be a player for this flight," spacecraft communicator Dominic Gorie informed Columbia's crew of five.

It was the first time in the 15-year history of the shuttle programme that astronauts encountered problems with the airlock hatch, which leads into the cargo

bay. Astronauts Tammy Jernigan and Toni Jones intended to make two space walks to practice construction of NASA's planned international space station, which is due to start next November.

"I know that I'm extremely frustrated and I'm sure that they are even more so," said Jerry Ross, an astronaut who has completed four space walks. He helped investigate the problem from mission control in Houston.

Flight controllers gave the astronauts the disappointing news after waking them at 4

p.m. est (2100 GMT) with "break on through to the other side" by the doors.

Teams of engineers worked day and night on the problem after the hatch refused to open Thursday night, blocking the first of two planned space walks.

Hours of video beamed back from the shuttle and attempts to reconstruct the problem with simulators on the ground failed to determine what had caused the problem, said Randy Stone of NASA's Mission Operations.

Tamils unite to oppose vote in Sri Lanka war zone

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka's minority Tamil parties rallied Sunday to bitterly oppose government moves to stage local elections in the island's embattled northern regions where security forces battle Tamil Tiger rebels.

Five Tamil political parties, including two which have 12 parliamentary seats and support the government, joined ranks to condemn the elections due to take place between January and February next year.

"The decision of the government is to create a myth among the international community that democracy, peace and civil administration have been restored in the northern province," the Tamil parties said.

"While we are committed to the restoration of peace and democracy in the north, we condemn any move with ulterior motives," said the five parties which gave up a violent campaign to join the democratic mainstream in 1987.

Earlier, another pro-government Tamil party, the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), said the local elections must not go ahead because moderate politicians were not allowed to

campaign in the area.

The TULF, which has five members in the 225-member National Assembly and supports the coalition government of President Chandrika Kumaratunga, said they felt that free and fair voting cannot take place in the north.

"No democratic political party has been able to engage in any political activity (in the north) up to date," the TULF said in a statement. "We urge the government not to hold local government elections in the north."

Elections Commissioner Dayananda Dissanayake has announced that nominations will open on Dec. 11 to elect members to 27 municipal, urban and village councils in four districts where Tamils are concentrated.

The separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were dominating large parts of the northern province but the area under their control was reduced considerably following military operations since last year.

Elections chief Dissanayake said the main council up for grabs will be the Jaffna municipality, the

main local authority in the north of the country. Tamil Tiger guerrillas were driven out of the area last year.

"These will be the first local elections in the areas since 1983," Mr. Dissanayake said. He said balloting that was to be held in 1987 had been postponed since then because of security considerations.

The government has said that it wants a local Tamil leadership to emerge in Jaffna to take over the rehabilitation of the unbattered region where most civilian duties are now supervised by the military.

Although the government has called elections in the troubled north, local council elections in the rest of the country have been postponed three times till April next year.

The fighting between government forces and the LTTE has prevented voting in the north-east of the country where the two million Tamil community is concentrated.

However, the government held controversial parliamentary and presidential elections in the island's north in 1994 but the turnout was negligible with some members getting elec-

ted with a hand full of votes.

The LTTE has consistently opposed elections in the island's north-east where they are fighting to establish an independent Tamil homeland. More than 50,000 people have died in bitter fighting in the past 24 years.

Meanwhile, Tamil Tiger guerrillas fired a barrage of mortar bombs and rocket propelled grenades at a Hindu temple in eastern Sri Lanka Sunday as a Tamil legislator addressed local residents, officials said.

LTTE gunmen kept up the attack for more than half an hour, wounding two soldiers and four civilians at the Hindu temple in the village of Kiran, officials said by telephone.

Tamil MP S. Thuraiyasingham was speaking to local residents in the presence of military field commanders when the attack took place, said officials in Batticaloa, 303 kilometres east of here.

"The security forces retaliated using long range guns in their armoured vehicles and forced the terrorists to withdraw," an official said. "We have no immediate reports of their casualties."

ASEAN leaders defy Western pressure on rights

JAKARTA (R) — South East Asian leaders left for home Sunday after a 10-nation summit in Jakarta in which they defied Western pressure on flashpoints of human rights concerns, including Burma and East Timor.

The heads of government of the seven-member Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) said in a joint statement that observer nations Burma, Laos and Cambodia, who also attended Saturday's summit, would be granted full membership in the club simultaneously but stopped short of saying when.

The stand appeared to defy Western pressure to at least delay the move in the case of Burma because of the Rangoon military government's crackdown on a pro-democracy movement led by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.

Summit officials said the leaders of Burma, Laos, Cambodia and the Philippines left Sunday morning while those from Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Thailand and Vietnam departed soon after the summit's conclusion Saturday afternoon.

The joint declaration issued at the end of the summit also said it "noted with increasing concern the efforts of one member of the EU (European Union) to introduce extraneous issues such as the question of East Timor in the economic cooperation and interaction between ASEAN and the EU."

"It's Portugal," Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas later told reporters.

Bosnian polls get go-ahead for 1997

SARAJEVO (AFP) — Bosnia's postponed municipal elections will go ahead in 1997, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) announced Sunday, after winning agreement for the vote from all sides.

"After sustained negotiations between the OSCE and leaders of the government and the Republika Srpska, agreement has been reached on OSCE supervision of the municipal elections in 1997," the head of the OSCE mission in Bosnia, former U.S. diplomat Robert Frowick said Sunday.

The Republika Srpska is the name of the Serb-run half in post-war Bosnia. "I think this is a particularly welcome development before the Lisbon summit of the OSCE," said Mr. Frowick.

The municipal elections were originally to take place on Sept. 14 this year, at the same time as the country's first post-war national-level polls but were postponed, first to November and then to next year following objections by the Bosnian

Serbs.

In November the leaders of the Muslim-Croat Federation, the other half of Bosnia, formally invited the OSCE to supervise local elections in 1997. But until Sunday the leaders of the Republika Srpska disagreed.

On Saturday, Bosnian Serb President Biljana Plavcic said an agreement was close.

"I think we are following the good way to make an agreement," on rules for the elections, she told, speaking in English, after a meeting with the head of the OSCE mission in Bosnia, former U.S. diplomat Robert Frowick, in the northern town of Banja Luka Saturday.

Mr. Frowick said Sunday Ms. Plavcic had signed an "agreement on local elections," formally requesting the OSCE to extend its mission of election supervision which it was given as part of the Dayton Peace Agreement signed in 1995.

On Monday, the OSCE opens a summit in Lisbon in which it will review its operations in Bosnia and consider a range of other Euro-

pean security concerns, including the deteriorating situation in Belarus.

Meanwhile, ministers from more than 50 countries meet in London this week to take stock of the year-old Bosnian peace process and discuss how to tackle major problems that international efforts have so far failed to resolve.

A year after the Bosnian rivals hammered out a peace deal in Dayton, Ohio to end the 43-month war, the divided country shows few signs of sticking to the civilian elements of the agreement designed to help bury old hatreds.

"It is time we again pressed the main players in the Balkan drama to live up to their commitments," said a European diplomat who asked to remain anonymous.

Foreign ministers from Europe and North America, Russia, Bosnia, Croatia and Yugoslavia, as well as officials from the major aid agencies, will discuss the problems during a two-day peace implementation conference Wednesday and Thursday.

Opposition on roll in fight with Milosevic

BELGRADE (R) — Serbia's opposition, fighting 50 years of socialist rule, have promised new initiatives in their campaign to topple President Slobodan Milosevic as popular support grew for two weeks of street demonstrations.

A march in Belgrade drew 100,000 protesters Saturday and Sunday, the largest since the (together) coalition of opposition parties planned Monday to take control of seven cities where they claim to have beaten the ruling socialists in elections this month.

They promised the cities would form a democratic alliance in opposition to what they call the one-party "totalitarianism" of the socialists who hold power nationally.

Boothed local elections this month have thrown Serbia into chaos. Mr. Milosevic's socialists admitted being defeated by Zajedno but balked at surrendering power and organised new ballots which secured their return to power in a blatant display of vote rigging.

With Mr. Milosevic maintaining an aloof silence amid daily demonstrations by thousands of opposition supporters in Belgrade, the socialists appeared to be ceding big provincial cities while insisting on control of the capital and the impor-

tant industrial centre of Nis. The challenge is the strongest Mr. Milosevic has faced in nine years of power during which former Yugoslavia has disintegrated in war and crippling international sanctions for Serbia.

Mr. Milosevic has survived previous attempts to dislodge him and still controls the security apparatus and powerful state administration.

Zajedno leaders have a double strategy for the coming week. On Monday they plan to move into the town halls they say they have won and set up an alternative power structure.

They will begin a boycott of parliament Tuesday unless it agrees to annul the local elections results which they accuse the socialists of rigging.

The opposition's main problem is that real power remains with Mr. Milosevic, who has a majority in the republican and federal parliaments in Yugoslavia and appears content to wait for Zajedno to make a wrong move.

Both sides are wooing the support of a domestic silent majority which is fearful of violent conflict breaking out between Serbs and Croats for rescue from five years of economic impoverishment.

The odds are in favour of

Mr. Milosevic with his control of government and the media but diplomats believe his position will be weakened if the opposition continues to shed his credibility by spinning out the conflict.

There is some surprise that the Socialists, who organised the elections and counted the votes, got themselves into such a mess in the first place.

Loyalties within Zajedno are fragile and some of its leaders have a history of instability which makes ordinary Serbs, comfortable with authoritarian leadership, feel uneasy.

But the opposition's handling of this challenge, to Mr. Milosevic has meant weight to their charge that he runs a one-party state in the guise of a multi-party democracy.

It has struck a chord with Serbia's middle class who have watched a political and criminal elite profit hugely from the country's privatisations under sanctions.

Saturday's demonstration in the capital attracted around 100,000 people of all ages including parents who brought their children in to witness a disciplined show of opposition.

One mother said she brought her children "because I want them to learn what democracy is...I want them to remember this."

Ugandan troops take Zaire town — Kinshasa

KINSHASA (Agencies) — Ugandan troops have captured the northeast Zairean town of Beni, a spokesman for the Zairean army said Sunday.

Ugandan troops entered the town, which is 50 kilometres from Butembo in North Kivu province, Saturday at 3:30 p.m. after entering Zaire at the Kasindi border post, he said.

A spokesman for the Zairean government said earlier that Ugandan troops had taken part in attacks in the region of Beni and Kasindi.

The spokesman also lodged a strong protest against plans by Lieutenant-General Maurice Baril, the Canadian commander of the multi-national force to be sent to the central African region, to set up headquarters at Entebbe, in Uganda.

On Saturday, a Ugandan officer in Kampala told AFP the Ugandan army — the Ugandan People's Defence Force (UPDF) — had troops in Zairean territory used by rebels to launch attacks on the country.

Lieutenant-Colonel Jet

Mwebazi told AFP that the Ugandan army had Thursday entered Kasindi, a Zairean town lying three kilometres from the Uganda border, and were still inside the town.

Col. Mwebazi said the UPDF had entered Zaire after Zairean-based Ugandan rebels of the Allied Democratic Army (ADA) shelled the border town of Mpondwe six times Wednesday, killing at least two Ugandan soldiers.

"We had to chase the rebels from Kasindi. We found no Zairean army there, just the rebels, who had taken over the (Zairean) barracks. The rebels put up some small resistance and then ran away."

We don't know where they are now, but we know they are not in Kasindi," Col. Mwebazi said.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of Rwandan Hutu refugees are trapped in the mountains above Goma living in a desperate bid to evade marauding Zairean Tutsi rebels, missionaries and

workers reported Sunday.

The refugees are concentrated in the Virungas National Park on the slopes of the Nyiragongo Volcano overlooking the eastern Zairean town, using its long grasses and trees as cover from the Tutsi rebels hunting them down, the missionaries said.

They fled the refugee camps of Kanale and Kahindo north of Goma weeks ago after the camps were hit by mortar fire, they said.

Nuns who reached the area reported seeing three mass graves each containing dozens of people. They said the forest refugees were living in terror, constantly changing their camps after coming under rebel attack.

These are the refugees who would immediately benefit from the kind of controlled air-drop of supplies suggested by the head of the Canadian-led multinational force for Zaire, Lieutenant-General Maurice Baril.

Planners for the mission

have yet to decide whether the supply of relief will be solely by air drops or whether it will require a ground operation to escort or channel the aid.

The air-drop idea has so far been strongly contested by the authorities in Kinshasa, the aid organisations and the rebels.

In Uganda, base for the multinational force, Canadian military spokesman Major Scott Davidson said the agreement of the Zairean rebel leader, Laurent Kabila, was necessary in order to deliver aid in the Goma and Bukavu areas.

The U.N. High Commis-

sioner for Refugees (UNHCR) says that many refugees were duped into not returning by Hutu extremists who claimed the new Tutsi-led government in Rwanda would be overthrown.

The return of about 600,000 refugees from Zaire the past month — after Rwandan-backed rebels took control of eastern Zaire — has weakened the influence of the extremists.

UNHCR officials say. About 10,000 of the refugees have returned home since the camps in northern-west Tanzania were set up but since the start of November the return of some 550, including former government officials, has raised hopes the others might also go back.

The decision two weeks ago by a former Rwandan district commissioner for Rusumo, Joseph Habimana, to return home — given prominence on Rwandan radio — prompted widespread discussion in the Benaco camps. He was the most senior refugee to return home so far.

"I believe within one year not half will still be here. The majority of Rwandans in my opinion will have gone back," said Musa Abiriga, the UNHCR head in Ngara.

Mr. Abiriga told Reuters this week that a key factor for refugees would be how those who left Zaire were resettled.

The Tanzanian government is also planning to relocate up to 200 Hutu extremists and intimidators to another camp as a further confidence-booster.

Burundi rebels report fierce fighting

NAIROBI (R) — Burundi's main Hutu rebel group said Sunday its forces had stepped up a guerrilla campaign inside the tiny central African nation and fierce fighting was raging in the five main regions.

Innocent Nimpagaritse, East Africa representative for the National Council for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD), said the fighting in the provinces of Kayanza, rural Bujumbura, Bururi, Rutana and Kinyigi had sent thousands of women and children fleeing into neighbouring Tanzania.

"As I speak to you our forces are engaging government troops in fierce battles..." Nimpagaritse said.

He confirmed reports by aid workers that the latest fighting had sent thousands fleeing into Tanzania, already home to more than 700,000 Rwandan and Burundian Hutu refugees.

Condoms and film stars called up in fight against AIDS

HONG KONG (AFP) — Millions of condoms were distributed and rallies were staged in several Asian capitals Sunday to mark World AIDS Day as ominous warnings were sounded over the rising spread of the disease.

Despite energetic campaigns, the United Nations has said that India, China and poor South East Asian nations are becoming a massive breeding ground for the virus.

Experts say religious sensitivities, ignorance and official incompetence are still hampering the battle to control acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

In Thailand, where an estimated 800,000 people have the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the precursor to AIDS, more than three million free condoms were to be handed out

starting Sunday at state-run petrol stations.

Similar campaigns were carried out in other major Asian cities. Hong Kong bar staff were giving out condoms bearing the message "safer sex or no sex" with change for drinks.

Movie stars mingled with prostitutes, doctors and students in a march through Bombay's sprawling red-light district Saturday night.

Several thousand people marched through the Bangladesh capital Dhaka to press for greater awareness, while in Manila a near riot and a stabbing forced an early end to an AIDS awareness rock concert.

South and South East Asia, though not as badly hit as Africa, have twice the prevalence of HIV than that recorded in North America and Western Europe.

More than 3.2 million

adults and children in the region are HIV-infected, about a quarter of the global population at risk, according to a new U.N. study, HIV/AIDS: The Global Epidemic.

Experts have warned that heterosexual contact is now the biggest spreader of HIV, from Bombay, India's sex capital, to China's Hainan Island, which has a huge population of prostitutes and is a major draw for China's middle class.

Thailand has become a model for reducing HIV in men, but infection is spreading fast among women and children as the virus moves down the chain. An estimated 6,400 children are infected annually, around one-tenth of all new HIV infections in the country.

Neighbouring Cambodia is expected to have Asia's highest rate of HIV infection by 2000, U.N. experts have warned.

In the next four years, 30,000 people are expected to be sick and dying from AIDS-related illnesses, according to Paul Matthews, coordinator of the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP) in Phnom Penh.

Some 120,000 Cambodians are already thought to be HIV carriers and campaigners there have echoed calls in other countries for a massive education campaign.

According to the World Health Organization, Cambodia has the second highest concentration of HIV carriers in Asia — just below Thailand and just ahead of India.

By 2000, officials predict Cambodia will have the highest number of cases in Asia, followed by India, Burma and Thailand.

Religious leaders in Ma-

laysia held talks on AIDS at temples and churches Sunday.

"This is in line with the Health Ministry's aim of making religion the core of AIDS prevention efforts," said the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity and Sikhism.

But the social and religious battle against the stigma of AIDS and treating it remains formidable throughout Asia.

A survey by the Chinese University in Hong Kong found that one-fifth of health care workers would refuse to treat HIV or AIDS sufferers.

And in Indonesia and other predominantly Muslim countries, the authorities have embarked on only a half-hearted campaign to distribute condoms because of fears of religious opposition, social workers say.

Perry in Japan for Okinawa scaleback

TOKYO (R) — U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry flew to Japan Sunday to conclude an agreement on reducing the U.S. military presence on Okinawa, a move galvanised by the rape of a Japanese schoolgirl by three American Marines.

Under the agreement, pushed by both governments to settle a highly contentious issue, the United States will return some 12,000 of the 58,000 acres (23,000 hectares) now used by the U.S. Military on the Japanese island.

The agreement, including key changes in Marine Corps training and flight operations and reduction of aircraft noise, will be finalised Monday by Mr. Perry and Japanese officials including Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda and Defence Minister Fumio Kyuma.

Mr. Perry, arriving from the United Arab Emirates, stressed that the deal would reduce the U.S. military intrusion into the lives of Okinawans. He added that at the same time it would not diminish U.S. security in either Okinawa or elsewhere in Japan.

The highly-visible and boisterous presence of the U.S. military on Okinawa has for decades drawn "Yankee go home" protests from islanders. Those objections rose to a new pitch when a 12-year-old schoolgirl was raped by three U.S. servicemen on Okinawa in 1995.

"I have to say that I'm

very proud of what we have achieved," Mr. Perry told reporters travelling with him at the end of a 13-hour flight from the United Arab Emirates. "There is no security relationship for the United States that is more important than the U.S.-Japan security alliance, which has been an absolute bedrock of stability in the Asia-Pacific region."

"We have significantly reduced the burden on the Okinawan people. While we have done that, we have maintained the vital security mission that the U.S. forces are there to perform."

The agreement will not significantly reduce the 28,000 U.S. troops on Okinawa and would not mean any reduction in the 47,000 American soldiers, sailors and airmen in Japan, which both governments agree is a key to stability on the Pacific rim.

President Bill Clinton. Mr. Perry and other U.S. officials have expressed deep regret to Japan for the rape. The three U.S. Marines were tried and convicted in a Japanese court.

The agreement, drawn up after detailed studies by a joint Japanese-U.S. Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO), would have a major impact on Marine Corps training on the subtropical island 1,000 kilometres south of Tokyo and close to North Korea and China.

It would lower the profile of training, including relocation of parachute drop

areas and ending physical training hikes on public roads.

One of the biggest changes will be closure of the Marine Corps air station at Futenma in the next five to seven years.

No final decision has been made yet on what to do with the Marine helicopter operations at Futenma, although the Japanese government is expected to opt for building a revolutionary \$2 billion floating heliport just off Okinawa's coast.

Japan, which will pay for the costly U.S. changes, is also considering consolidating Futenma's helicopter operations with U.S. Air Force operations at Kadena Air Base on Okinawa or putting a new heliport on reclaimed land near Camp Schwab in northern Okinawa.

The mayors of several towns in Okinawa have protested against any shift to already-busy Kadena.

Under the SACO agreement, the United States will return to the Japanese half of the Marine Corps' northern training area on Okinawa, the largest U.S. military installation in Japan.

That return includes 9,000 acres of mountainous jungle wilderness used for Marine combat and survival training.

In addition to the turnover of land, the U.S. military will implement noise reduction initiatives at bases on the island, including the shifting of large patrol and cargo aircraft on Kadena until it is closed.

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Will Netanyahu take heed?

JORDAN YESTERDAY stopped short of condemning Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's policies that so far led to a stalemate in the peace process at the Palestinian and Syrian tracks and that is endangering the treaties that Jordan and Egypt have concluded with the Jewish state.

In interviews with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the Israeli newspaper, Maariv, His Majesty King Hussein and Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti strove to constrain themselves from outright condemnations of Israel's continued and persistent violations of the spirit of peace that Netanyahu has made a mockery of.

The King said he was becoming impatient and concerned that the peace process could be thrown off track. "Anything could happen that could throw us completely off the track we have chosen," the King said. Meanwhile, the prime minister said he was puzzled and frustrated by Mr. Netanyahu's words and deeds. "You hear something and what you see on the ground is something else," Mr. Kabariti said.

While the Jordanian leaders were sending all these warnings to the Israeli leader, Mr. Netanyahu was visiting settlements in the Jordan Valley promising to build more colonies on occupied Arab land and declaring that these settlements will be the final frontiers of the Jewish state. In Hebron, where Israel has been delaying the redeployment of its troops and which Netanyahu is trying to use as a Trojan horse to change the Oslo agreements, Israeli settlers were beating and terrorising Palestinians.

Nonetheless, Mr. Netanyahu and his right-wing ministers seem unable to read and understand the warnings that come from Jordan, Egypt and other quarters of the Arab World. Jordan, which does not only view peace as a strategic option but rather as a matter of life and death, knows very well what awaits the region if the Israeli leadership continued to talk on its commitments to the Palestinians, the Syrians and the sponsors of the peace process. Mr. Netanyahu and his colleagues should know, if they only care to read a bit of history, that in the end Jordan and Egypt will side with their brethren, the Palestinians, the Syrians and the Lebanese. They should realise that when Jordan calls for a comprehensive peace, it means that separate peace treaties will not hold on their own. It will be very difficult for Jordan or Egypt to defy the will of their people and watch Israeli tanks reoccupy the West Bank or Israeli warplanes bombard Damascus.

Furthermore, by procrastinating on peace, Israel will strengthen the hands of those who want to sabotage whatever has been built so far and will push Arab states to seek more devastating weapons to counter Israel's might.

Instead the Israeli leaders need to strive to attain comprehensive peace as soon as possible to enable the countries and peoples of the region to move on and cooperate in the fields of economy, human rights, disarmament and security.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i Sunday expressed concern over the continued failure of the Arab League to deal effectively with the Palestinian question. Due to continued differences among them, Mahmoud Rimawi said the Arab League, which is meeting Sunday to review the situation in the occupied Palestinian lands, is not expected to take practical steps to help the Palestinians but rather is expected to repeat clichés condemning Israel's illegal practices and the building of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Arabs held a conference in Cairo last June in which they announced that all links with Israel will be kept on hold awaiting progress in the Middle East peace process and pending Israel's implementation of its peace accords with the Palestinians, recalled the writer. What is required from the Arab League meeting now, he said, is to take practical steps in implementation of that summit's resolution which has reaffirmed the Arab Nation's statement that peace can only come through the exchange of land occupied by Israel since 1967, said the writer. Time for Arab action in this respect is long overdue and the Arabs should end their petty differences and focus attention on forcing Israel to remove the settlements altogether because they obstruct the path of peace, and keep up the pressure on the Jewish state and expose its practices before the whole world.

A WRITER for Al Ra'i described the water situation facing Jordan at present as a tragedy bordering on disaster, warning of serious dangers in the future due to projected severe shortages. Subhi Fahmawi said while the concerned world organisations estimate the annual requirements of water by an individual to be 1,000 cubic metres, an average Jordanian consumes only 220 cubic metres a year. Noting that the Kingdom is currently utilising the underground water resources, as well as the rain water, for its domestic, agricultural and industrial needs, the writer said that these resources are rapidly depleted at a time when the population is growing at an alarming rate, requiring more and more water supplies. According to statistics and estimates published recently, the water resources in the Palestinian lands, Israel and Jordan are sufficient for up to five million people at most, provided proper management is observed, but the region is inhabited by around 12 million people whose water needs increase by the day and whose population is not expected to stop growing at a fast rate, said the writer. He said these figures indicate that quick and effective measures should be taken at the national and regional levels to deal with the challenge.

Economic Review

Do not smoke that cigarette!

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

ECONOMISTS AND social scientists have been puzzled for several years by addiction and the reason(s) why rational people tend to become addicted to something like cigarettes, even though it is common knowledge that their consumption is harmful to them and others. Cigarette addiction produces, in the view of many scientists, anomalies and is, therefore, at the heart of research. However, the present article is not concerned with the theoretical implications of smoking, but merely with explaining why people continue to smoke.

One of the most enduring economic doctrines is the concept of diminishing marginal satisfaction, a concept which has been used to solve many important problems. This concept means that each additional unit of a product that is consumed beyond a certain level of consumption produces less satisfaction to the consumer than its predecessor — the previous unit. One only needs to observe how people react to food, meeting with other people, including loved ones, recently purchased cars, etc. to become convinced that this principle is actually a truism.

Laboratory research at the University of Arizona, for example, revealed that cigarettes are addictive in mice.

According to the principle of diminishing marginal utility, the first cigarette of the day tastes better than a later cigarette because satisfaction from each additional cigarette diminishes with consumption. However, people continue to smoke.

Why do people continue to smoke past the first cigarette? The answer cannot be additional pleasure derived from each additional cigarette. For one thing, that would nullify the diminishing marginal satisfaction principle. Also, any smoker would tell you that he continues to smoke to a level beyond which cigarettes do taste nasty.

Smokers continue to smoke, like all addicts, for fear of the pain they would receive from abstinence. This fear may outweigh even their dislike of the substance itself. That is also why a person would smoke a cigarette knowing fully well that he/she is the primary cause of increasing threefold the probability of his/her children dying of lung cancer and, most importantly, the person himself's getting lung cancer; the likelihood of dying from lung cancer increases sevenfold in smokers, relative to non-smokers.

What makes a substance addictive? Many researchers believe that there is a direct relationship between the incidence of addiction and the speed with which the drug reaches the brain. Nicotine can reach the brain within seven seconds from inhaling the smoke. Incidentally, this is also the speed with which heroin reaches the brain, which is why 74 per cent of people who quit smoking actually go back to it — exactly the same failure rate for those who attempt to quit heroin.

Why are people who give up an addictive substance

almost invariably very moody and never seem happy? Because they have lost their natural ability to feel happy. The brain, being a very efficient machine, gives up the pleasure neurones, which exist in the stem of the brain, since stimulus is given to it through artificial means. Once the person gives up an addiction, the brain is incapable of feeling or generating pleasure by itself. So the person becomes naturally unhappy.

Physicians usually prescribe to their patients who want to quit a bad addiction another form of addiction, such as sports which is considered a healthy addiction, to replace the one they intend to give up. Thus, a person can continue to receive stimulus from outside the brain. In other words, once an addict, one is always an addict.

So what to do? Society and governments must become involved by decreasing the demand for addictive substances.

According to projections by the World Bank group, published on June 3, 1996, the number of people who die from tobacco-related diseases worldwide will rise from 3 million this year to 10 million by 2025, with 7 million being from developing countries. Furthermore, of the world's 1.1 billion smokers, 800 million live in the developing countries.

Dr. Richard Feachem, a senior advisor in the Human Development Department at the World Bank, said: "Within three decades, in developing nations, tobacco use may kill more people than AIDS, tuberculosis and complications from childbirth combined." He added that "tobacco consumption is falling in most Western countries but is rising in the developing world and tobacco companies already target developing countries."

Unfortunately his words ring very true in Jordan where cigarettes are still viewed as a sign of maturity, success or even sophistication, while, in fact, they are cancer causing, environmentally polluting and costly, hard to shake off habits that benefit no one.

The government in Jordan should follow the example of the U.S. government in this regard, which was so successful at creating a negative image of smokers and smoking that educated and successful white-collar workers began to associate smoking with the low skilled, uneducated blue-collar labour.

We should work on reducing the demand for cigarettes and increasing taxes on tobacco products. Both supply and demand of cigarettes should be decreased if Jordan is to combat this deadly addiction. Smoke-related diseases tax everyone in society as they bear the cost of treating those who cannot afford treatment. Most importantly, smokers and others must know that by lighting a cigarette, they are signalling to everyone that they cannot be happy without an artificial stimulus. And that they are addicts that need to be cured.

LETTERS

Humanity of a job.

To the Editor:

INITIALLY, I wrote this letter as a troubled citizen, frustrated with a very disturbing incident that took place at the Jordan University Hospital on Nov. 19, 1996.

Today, I write with a heavier heart, filled with grief, because Marwan Taiseer Othman, a fourteen-year-old youth, died of leukaemia before we were able to make his innocent, youthful dream come true.

Aware that his time was drawing near, Marwan asked only that he be given the chance to see himself on TV, and to voice a final message to his fellow youths. We learned of this request only on Nov. 18, 1996, from a doctor who was visiting Marwan regularly.

Dr. Abdullah Al Khalaf, president of the General Union of Voluntary Societies, out of personal initiative and sympathy, lost no time to contact the head of Jordan Television asking for his cooperation in granting the child his wish as soon as possible, since nobody knew how much time he had left.

We were assured by the doctor who brought us Marwan's request that he would get permission from Marwan's parents and the hospital for the filming.

Jordan Television was more than helpful. They cut out a slot from one of their children's programmes airing the next day and mobilised a film crew to shoot the next morning. They even postponed the airing of the programme for two hours in order to allow time for editing in Marwan's slot. All this to accommodate this young boy's last wish.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for Dr. Mahmoud Abu Khalaf, director of the Jordan University Hospital. Through some faulty internal communications system, Dr. Abu Khalaf did not receive word or request for filming. This fact aside, the director — without whose permission we were told we would not be allowed to film — could not find it in himself to set aside the routine and regulations and rise above the fact that no one asked his personal permission for filming.

Before the cameras arrived, we were able to "smack" up the two programme hosts, so they could judge for themselves if Marwan's condition could allow him to appear on television. They had brought Marwan balloons. He loved balloons. It made him so happy to see them, and they said they would manage to film him, even if it was just for a few seconds.

Besides, it was time we started recognising cancer as the big problem it was becoming in our community. It was time we started confronting it and stopped ignoring and hiding it.

In the meantime, the film crew spent two hours downstairs, pleading with the University Hospital's public relations employee, who relayed the messages to the director, only to be told over and over again that Dr. Abu Khalaf refuses to allow the filming.

Eventually, he got what he wanted, and a dying child never got his dying wish. It is a frightening thought that such men should be in such positions of power. No matter how improper the procedures taken might have been, the core of medicine should be humanity and not bureaucratic rules.

It was not some doctor or nurse we were asking to interview, so that we could be sent away and asked to come back after going through "the right channels." It was a dying child who was not satisfied with merely seeing himself on home video, a child who wanted only to be on public television, so that all the other children could see him.

In such exceptional cases, these people who hold the power to say "yes" or "no" should exercise greater wisdom and better judgement. The people at Jordan Television were able to see that it was only too bad that those who should have been more sensitive to this issue were not.

The damage was done. Although I continued for two days to try to contact Dr. Abu Khalaf or his secretary, I was not able to find them. Marwan — God bless his gentle soul — could not wait for our procedures to go through.

The next time something like this happens, whether at the Jordan University Hospital or anywhere else, I only hope that power-obsessed minds will realise that it is we, the people, who set the rules and regulations (which should only be guidelines), and it is we who must decide when it is time to set aside these rules and use the better judgement of our humanity.

Dina Ra'ad,
Amman

Controlled emotions

To the Editor:

CARING FOR a patient in the hospital is the responsibility of a team composed of the treating physician, nurses, resident doctors and the paramedical service personnel. No person, not even the administrator of the hospital, is to interfere in the delicate and sensitive relationship between the patient and his managing team.

The doctor Ms. Ra'ad is referring to as having visited Marwan is a teacher in the school of nursing of the University of Jordan. She comes from time to time with her students to the paediatric floor. She is not part of the regular nursing staff of the hospital and she had no responsibility for the child's care.

She was supposed to get in touch with members of the nursing team at the hospital, which she failed to do. Instead, she contacted Ms. Ra'ad and Dr. Khalaf who took charge and contacted the Jordan TV. Next morning the crew with Ms. Ra'ad were in, and nobody knew why. Is that right? She is in public relations and Dr. Khalaf is on top of voluntary society system. Where is the coordination?

I was called by my staff at 9:45 a.m. on Nov. 19, 1996. I had to grant a permission for something I did not know about. I tried to contact the treating physician. I could not reach him. I went up to the patient's room. I found him in no shape to appear on a public TV programme. He had leukaemia, had received chemotherapy and got a relapse, plus complications. He was drowsy with fever, pale and with fallen hair. He had a problem with blood clotting and had evidence of bleeding internally.

I took the decision not to allow the TV crew to go on with their mission for two reasons:

1. The patient was in no shape to appear on TV on a general programme.

2. The public view about cancer in general and leukaemia in particular would have been negatively affected by the helpless situation of the terminal condition of a patient. I was concerned about parents denying their children the chance of a cure by chemotherapy if they saw the negative aspect of this line of management. Also, I was concerned about the repercussion on the hospital.

For these two reasons, I made the painful decision. But, we did not turn our back on the child's wish. I did arrange for a team from the Centre for Education Technology to prepare a video film on the paediatric floor and we invited his family to share the video picturing. That afternoon he had the video film. His nurses viewed the video for his parents. His wishes came through without a backlash on the medical practice or the hospital image.

The profession has been caring for cancer patients since the start of medical care in Jordan. This care improved from a decade to another. The involvement of the General Union of Voluntary Societies and its head in the care of cancer patients is greatly appreciated; and we wish them the best of luck. However, let us not forget those who served in the past, and let us encourage those people who are providing their best, at the present and in the future. Cancer care is not just starting now.

Finally, let us not play on the emotions of our people; physicians are trained to handle the emotional needs of their patients without overreacting but with clear vision.

Cancer is no stranger to me. I have a first degree cousin with Down's syndrome and leukaemia and he is a 5-year-old child. Also, my sister is receiving chemotherapy for cancer. I have a major interest in treating gastro-intestinal cancer. I know what it means to have cancer and to die of cancer. Also, I have the painful experience of standing helpless when caring for a patient dying with cancer. We learned to control our emotion and to use our knowledge and skills. We care but we do not overreact. But we do have hearts.

In case this happens again, I pray to God that Ms. Ra'ad and her colleagues will have the time to get to the telephone and call concerned people on the other line. They are humans too. They have feelings. They care. Fourteen hours is not too short a time for a person to make a phone call. Isn't communication related to humanity?

Dr. Mahmoud Abu Khalaf,
Amman.

Human Rights File

Israeli laws must accommodate the Palestinians

By Waleed M. Sadi

ISRAEL IS a de facto bi-national state by virtue of the fact that over a million Israeli citizens are Arabs. The question that remains is when will the Jewish country accept to become a de jure bi-national state. It seems that sooner or later the day will come when the organic law of Israel will have to be amended to reflect this inescapable truth.

When Iraq's constitution stipulates that the country is composed of two distinct peoples, the Arab majority and the Kurdish minority, is it acceptable that Israel, which prides itself with being an advanced pluralistic democracy, lag behind even Iraq in yielding to the full logic and dictates of the fact that it is constituted of two different peoples?

If this is the case, the ultimate ideal resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict could be that the Palestinian territories be integrated into Israel and the Palestinian people granted full citizenship rights. The end result would be an expanded bi-national state, the name of which will have to reflect more faithfully its factual identity and composition.

Of course there is another formula for the permanent settlement of the Palestinian question. Former U.S. Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger has recently suggested in an article that the only way Israel may experience permanent security is to work diligently for the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip that enjoys internationally recognised borders. In Kissinger's estimation, the fears and anxieties of Israel that a Palestinian state would always haunt Israel and ultimately have design on the rest of former Palestine should be allayed by assigning it fixed frontiers which would preempt any future effort to extend into Israel proper at any future date.

This Kissinger formula surely offers another way out of the dilemma that Israeli leaders have often faced. It would also assure the current ratio of Jew to Arab within Israel is kept at manageable level. As long as the Arab population in Israel is limited to one fifth, or even one fourth, of the total population, Israel will succeed to maintain its Jewish character. If Israel aims to absorb more Palestinian lands, it should mean that more Palestinian Arabs will eventually become Israeli citizens.

Civil rights movements like those the Afro-Americans initiated back in the sixties can be expected to spring roots in Israel sooner or later. Eventually, all Arab peoples who come under Israeli jurisdiction should succeed in attaining full citizenship rights. Dr. Kissinger's option for a separate Palestinian state with recognised borders would not only offer Israel security in terms of sealing the future of this proposed Palestinian state on a truncated piece of territory carved up from former Palestine but also reduce the "risk" of more Palestinians becoming Israeli citizens.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was deceiving himself, and his people, when he suggested that affording the Palestinians in the territories falling under the authority of the Palestine National Authority (PNA) a treatment similar to that being enjoyed by Puerto Ricans would solve all the Israeli problems. The Israeli prime minister also solemnly swore never to grant the Palestinians the right to self-determination. As if the right to self-determination were something for Israel to give or deny.

Most recently, Mr. Netanyahu threatened to stop peace talks with the PNA if it declares independence and the creation of a Palestinian state. Prime Minister Netanyahu's aim to have his cake and eat it too will simply not work because, even under the Puerto Rican example, the Palestinians will have to be accorded the right to exercise self-determination on periodic basis, to determine their form of association with Israel. Puerto Ricans conduct referendums every few years to decide on whether to link up to the U.S. and become the 51 state or maintain their status quo. Nowhere has Mr. Netanyahu indicated, in his Puerto Rican offer, that the Palestinians would be afforded a similar right to conduct national referendums on their future link with Israel. This is not to mention the fact that Puerto Ricans cannot freely in the U.S. engage in trade and commerce and seek employment on equal terms with U.S. citizens. Besides, the exercise of self-determination by all people is an inalienable right, well established in international law, U.N. resolutions and treaties that Israel had signed and ratified, foremost of which is, of course, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

The Israeli leader should take time to have a second look at ICCPR unless he plans to renege on it as he is doing on the Oslo accords, approved by the Labour-led government in 1993.

Israel, as presently constituted in a de facto bi-national state that could be transformed into a de jure bi-national country, would be better advised to heed the Kissinger formula and advance it sooner than later. Otherwise, Israel should seek the ultimate solution to the Palestinian case on the basis of a bi-national state made up of two peoples with different cultures and political aspirations. The experience of many other multi-racial or multi-ethnic countries has not been encouraging, with the exception of the U.S. where there has always been an established and determined melting pot policy to bring several races, colours, religions and ethnically different peoples together. It is doubtful that the U.S. experience can be duplicated in Israel even if there were a desire to do so, which is obviously not the case.

These conclusions make the Kissinger suggestion on how to solve seemingly irreconcilable differences between two peoples who find themselves sharing the same geographic region the most viable and operational. The sooner Mr. Netanyahu attains a similar vision for the future, and starts preparing and working for it, the better for both peoples.

Euro-Arab Parliamentary Dialogue concludes

(Continued from page 1)

The communiqué underlined "the new relationship created by the Barcelona Conference and its regional approach based on dialogue, meaning the refusal of extra-territorial measures such as the D'Amato Law on Libya and Iran." Under the D'Amato Law, passed by the United States in July, foreign companies investing over \$40 million in the oil industry of Libya or Iran are prevented from conducting business in the U.S.

The communiqué also welcomed as a first step the application of UN Security Council Resolution 986 in regards to Iraq, allowing the exchange of oil for food, and stressed the importance of preserving the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of that country. The communiqué added that the problem of sanctions against Sudan must be solved "through dialogue and peaceful means."

The communiqué called for greater Euro-Arab cooperation in combating terrorism, and underlined the need to create an international joint forum "to implement common policies and find common instruments to fight terrorism." During the discussions, Arab parliamentarians spoke of the dangerous link the West has made between Islam and terrorism, serving only to reinforce negative stereotypes.

"Arabs have been amongst the first victims of terrorism," said Bahraini delegate Ali Ben Mobammad Al Muslem.

In its call for a Mediterranean region free from weapons of mass destruction, the communiqué urged Israel to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The need for greater cultural cooperation between Europe and the Arab World was addressed in the communiqué, as was the need to extend participation of

civil society in the democracy-building processes in the Mediterranean region. The role of women in social, economic and political life was also emphasized.

Representative of the European Parliament Roy Perry said that "there is a need to address the rights and role of Muslims living in Europe to be free of discrimination." This could be achieved by greater cultural cooperation and awareness.

During the opening session on Saturday, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan was critical of the Europeans' efforts in the Middle East, and said he was more interested in the Far East. He said that he was saddened that the region was not included in the Asia-Europe Summit Meeting (ASEM) held in Bangkok in March, 1996. The meeting, the first of its kind, was concluded with an agreement on comprehensive areas of cooperation to include agreement to undertake facilitation and liberalisation measures to promote greater trade and investment between Asia and Europe. The meeting was attended by leaders of 10 Asian and 15 European countries and the president of the council of the European Union. ASEM is to be held every two years, with the second meeting scheduled for London in 1998.

In his opening remarks, the Regent also criticised those who were mostly interested in the region as a market for the sale of arms in exchange for petrodollars.

The Arab parliamentarians participating in the conference, jointly organized by the Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation and the Arab Parliamentary Union, welcomed the move by European parliamentarians to block Europe's economic accords with Israel, under the Euro-Mediterranean

agreements, as a way to exert pressure on the Israeli government.

"The European side indicated that we will do what we can in our respective governments to postpone ratification of Euro-Mediterranean agreements between the European Union and Israel. (The postponement) will send a message that we mean business. Israel can't have it both ways. It can't enjoy the advantages unless it adheres to the Oslo accords," Sir Robert Hicks, co-chairman of the Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation, told the Jordan Times. Europe is Israel's largest trading partner. Israel's trade with Europe surpasses trade with the United States.

Arab parliamentarians welcomed Europe's efforts to increase their role in the region, particularly by exerting pressure on Israel. "One of the main positive points emerging from the dialogue is the direction of the Europeans towards greater sympathy with the Arabs, asking for concrete European measures against Israel," Tawfik Abu Baker from the Palestinian delegation told the Jordan Times. "If the European parliamentarians succeed in blocking the implementation of its economic agreements with Israel, it will set a precedent. Economic pressure will have a significant impact," he added.

European delegates responded positively to the Arab parliamentarians' calls for greater involvement in the region. "There is a need for Europe to have a greater role in the peace process," said British delegate Lord Mayhew. "The American monopoly has always been preposterous, absurd. Israel is a domestic question for the United States. The U.S. has failed, year after year, for decades" to achieve peace in the region.

The Europeans have

cards which they need to play in terms of the economic agreements with Israel, added Lord Mayhew. He also said that it was up to the Arabs and the Palestinians to insist that the Europeans be more involved in the peace process. "We talk of competition with the U.S. I prefer balance. That's what Europe should strive at," Lord Mayhew added.

The European parliamentarians cited the need to achieve a more coordinated European stance towards the Middle East as a precondition for a revitalised European role. "I think Europe has much to offer provided we get our act together," said Anders Sjastad of Norway. "What happened in ex-Yugoslavia was not our finest hour...I hate to see the Middle East and the peace process be a playground of unsuccessful European efforts. We need consistent and comprehensive policies," he added.

Other measures suggested by the Europeans for a greater role in the region raised during the discussions was to take advantage of the free access European parliamentarians have to Israeli politicians and public opinion. "We should intensify our contacts, to lobby Israeli politicians and Israeli public media," said Albrecht Konecny from the Austrian delegation. He stressed though that the participants in the dialogue were parliamentarians, representing a segment of their population, and do not represent the country as a whole.

The two-day discussions were described as "very pertinent and constructive," by Sir Robert. "There were significant and encouraging contributions from the Arab representatives," demonstrating greater understanding of the realities of political conditions on the ground," he said.

Kabariti voices frustration

(Continued from page 1)

cannot talk on behalf of the Egyptians, adding that he had big doubts about whether Egypt would continue to sell oil to Israel.

On Syria, Mr. Kabariti said the Syrians have genuine desire to establish peace, but have doubts about Netanyahu's real

intentions and whether he would like to pursue dialogue with them. Why don't they resume negotiations from the point where they reached during their negotiations with former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

Arabs urge world not to finance settlements

(Continued from page 1)

from Mr. Netanyahu a promise "that 450 new homes will be built in the region and that the road following along the Jordan will be transformed into a central axis route."

Mr. Levy also quoted Mr. Netanyahu as saying that the Jordan Valley would be classed as a "priority development region."

The Palestinian representative at the Arab League warned Israel its policies would reignite violence in the region and alienate the Jewish state.

"The region will return to the atmosphere of tension, violence and disturbance, if Israel's current practices of Judaisation, procrastination and falsification continue," the Palestinian National Authority's (PNA) representative mission said in a statement to the emergency meeting of the league.

Mr. Netanyahu has infuriated Arabs by refusing to trade occupied Arab lands for peace — the basic principle of a 1991 Madrid peace accord — and also by lifting a ban imposed by the former government on building Jewish settlements on these lands.

Mr. Netanyahu last week added to Arab ire by visiting a settlement to show his support.

"Israel insists on ripping

apart the (Palestinian self-rule) West Bank to prevent the creation of a Palestinian state, but we are determined to defend our lands by all possible means against (Israeli) racist settlement plans," the statement added.

The statement also warned Israel of isolation by its Arab neighbours if it does not honour its peace pledges.

"Arabs and the Palestinians will not settle for anything less than the handover of all occupied lands for peace and Israel will find itself in severe isolation if it does not do that," the statement added.

"If Israel refuses this (land-for-peace) principle, on which the peace process is based, the current peace march will stop."

Mr. Darwish, the Syrian representative, told reporters that the international community was neglecting to make Israel enforce U.N. resolutions which call on the Jewish state to withdraw from occupied Arab lands.

"Why were international resolutions enforced on Bosnia, Cambodia and Africa and on Iraq, while they are not imposed on Israel?" Mr. Darwish asked.

Arafat and Mubarak review situation

(Continued from page 1)

on his arrival in Cairo.

Mr. Arafat flew in from Doha at the end of a two-day visit to Qatar, where he asked officials to adopt a firm stand towards Israel.

Qatar and Oman are the only two Gulf Arab countries to have established fledgling trade relations with Israel.

Mr. Arafat's arrival in Egypt coincided with a call by the Arab League to the international community to avoid financing the construction of Jewish settlements on occupied Arab land.

Syria's ambassador to Egypt, Issa Darwish, meanwhile called for a freezing of Arab-Israeli ties to protest Israel's policy of expanding settlements.

Israeli-Palestinian negotiations aimed at forging a solution to Israel's delayed military withdrawal from the West Bank town of Hebron are still locked in stalemate two months after

they were launched, with each side blaming the other for the impasse.

Mr. Arafat held talks with Qatar's Emir Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani after making a brief visit to the United Arab Emirates on Saturday.

Palestinian officials accompanying Mr. Arafat said he was to ask Qatar to adopt a firm stand towards Israel because of what they called its prevarication on the pullout from Hebron.

In July, Qatar decided to set up representation in the Palestinian territories and also announced the creation of a holding company with \$250 million to invest in the territories.

During his visit to the UAE, Mr. Arafat briefed President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan on the deadlocked negotiations with Israel on its withdrawal from Hebron, Palestinian officials said.

Talks also covered bilateral ties and UAE aid to the Palestinian self-rule areas.

Prisoner release expected soon

(Continued from page 12)

According to sources, no new cases related to the riots would be forwarded to courts for trial and those already filed with the judiciary would have to go through the legal process. However, those convicted would automatically qualify for the pardon as and when the sentences are pronounced, according to the sources.

Mr. Dughmi, the justice minister, said last week that no one arrested in connection with the unrest in the south over the rechanneling of subsidies for bread and fodder remained in prison.

One of the preconditions for eligibility for the amnesty was the dropping of all personal claims by those whose complaints might have led to the conviction of the prisoner concerned.

Most prisoners convicted of petty crimes and have served half of their sentences are eligible to be released under the amnesty, which does not cover violators of traffic regulations.

Those under trial are also excluded.

A ministerial committee in charge of finalising the release includes the minister of awqaf and Islamic affairs, the minister of state for prime ministry affairs and the minister of administrative development. The technical committee which prepared the recommendations for release includes the secretary general of the Interior Ministry, the Amman prosecutor general, the Amman governor and representatives of the Public Security Department, the military security department and the General Intelligence Department.

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Jordan pressures Israel to ease trade barriers

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuters

AMMAN — Jordan is pressing Israel to dismantle major obstacles to the flow of Jordanian goods to Israeli and Palestinian markets, officials said on Sunday.

They said Jordan had urged Israel in top-level talks last Tuesday to ease measures which Jordanian businessmen describe as blatant protectionism to keep a \$2 billion Palestinian market captive to Israeli firms.

Officials say resolving these issues are a key test of the Jewish state's desire for peace, with Arab suspicions already mounting over Israeli footdragging on implementing Israeli-Palestinian accords and activated settlements drive.

The key demand is that Israel dismantles the "back-to-back" system — taking goods off Jordanian trucks on one side of the border and loading them on Israeli trucks on the other.

Jordanian businessmen say the system causes delay, increased costs and paperwork, and that some consignments get damaged. They have called for a "door-to-door" delivery of goods.

"We are still negotiating a cancelling of the back-to-back system (to replace it with one) that facilitates, eases, and smoothes out procedures that will be mutually beneficial," Minister of Transport Nasser Al Lawzi told Reuters.

"The Jordanian side insisted on cancelling the back-to-back system, this is a must, and replacing it

with a door-to-door (one)." Officials are hopeful talks in early December between Minister of Trade Ali Abul Ragheb and his Israeli counterpart will also expand a 1995 trade treaty by setting up a "zero tariff free-trade zone area" for Jordanian goods in Israel.

Officials say Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has given his initial consent as a gesture to improve ties with Jordan. Mr. Lawzi blamed the back-to-back system and tough Israeli security measures for the limited bilateral trade since a long delayed cross-border trade accord came into effect in June.

He said they were also preventing Jordanian goods from being shipped through Israel to Mediterranean markets. Officials and businessmen say if border delays are eliminated Jordanian industry can capture a sizeable portion of the West Bank market, which has similar consumer patterns, a by-product of ethnic and historic ties.

Omar Salah, a leading industrialist, says streamlining administrative procedures, easing security checks, reducing handling fees and tariffs could allow exports to Israel to reach an estimated \$200-\$300 million annually.

"I find the Israeli and the West Bank and Gaza markets as untapped opportunities that could generate a lot of exports," said Mr. Salah, who heads Century Group, which has set up diversified plants with U.S. and European multi-nationals.

Palestinians study revision of economic accord with Israel

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Palestinians seek to revise economic accords with Israel in response to the stall in the peace process and Israeli efforts to "strangle" the Palestinian economy, officials said on Sunday.

"We have many options" in response to the logjam in negotiations over implementing the 1995 Oslo self-rule agreements, the Palestinian National Authority's (PNA) Cabinet Secretary Ahmed Abdel Rahman told AFP.

"Among the options, we are examining the radical revision of the economic accords signed in Paris" in 1994 as an annex to self-rule agreements,

he said.

"The accords were supposed to establish Palestinian economic relations with Israel and the world, but Israel has prevented the creation of these ties and stifled the movement of Palestinian trade," he said. The Paris economic accords detailed terms of economic relations, including trade, customs duties and export of Palestinian products abroad, but they have never been put into action.

Finance Minister Mohammad Nashashibi told the Palestinian news agency Wafa that the economic accords "must be revised in light of the closure" imposed by Israel

on the West Bank and Gaza Strip in February.

"It is impossible to build a Palestinian economy with the barriers and policies imposed by Israel," he said.

The closure has choked off the movement of Palestinian goods and workers and has caused between seven and nine million dollars in losses daily, according to the PNA.

Abdul Rahman accused Israel of cutting off Palestinian exports abroad and flooding the West Bank and Gaza with Israeli goods. "We are not here to be a market for Israel. We must end our dependency on the Israeli economy," he said.

Oil bonanza expected to slash Gulf budget deficits

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Six Gulf Arab states will be able to cut their budget deficits sharply this year thanks to billions of dollars in extra oil income and some may even record surpluses, experts predicted on Sunday. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which possesses nearly 45 per cent of the global oil wealth, is likely to earn some \$12 billion more this year than in 1995, they said.

"Considering that the six members have stuck to forecast expenditure, there will be no deficit in the combined budget this year as the additional revenues are more than sufficient to cover the shortfall," said Mohammed Al Asumi, chief economist at the state-run Emirates Industrial Bank (ETIB).

"Taking them individually, some will have a lower deficit while others are expected to record surpluses in their budgets," he told AFP.

GCC states Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the UAE and non-OPEC Oman and Bahrain produce around 13.5 million barrels per day of oil,

nearly half the cartel's output and a fifth of the world's total crude supplies.

Mr. Asumi said he expected Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar and possibly Oman to wipe out their deficits. Bahrain, which has little oil, could sharply trim its shortfall.

He said Kuwait, the third biggest oil producer in the Arab World, was expected to earn a little more than \$2 billion in extra oil income in 1996 because of an increase in the price of its crude.

This will enable Kuwait to cut its budget deficit in half from the projected figure of up to \$5.2 billion, he said.

"Whether all of them manage to eliminate the deficit or reduce it, you can say that the shortfall will be the lowest this year since the GCC states began suffering from budget deficits in mid 1980s," Mr. Asumi said.

Oil prices have remained buoyant this year because of strong demand and they are projected to average around \$20, more than \$3 above their 1995 level of \$16.80, according

to oil analysts.

In a study published on Saturday, EIB predicted the GCC's combined oil income to climb to around \$90 billion in 1996 from \$78 billion in 1995 because of the price surge. It attributed the higher prices to the delay in implementing the oil-for-food deal between Iraq and the United Nations and a steep decline in Western crude inventories.

The six GCC members have projected a budget deficit of around \$9 billion in 1996, the bulk of which is recorded in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

The figure is far lower than the 1995 shortfall of \$14 billion and the record deficit of \$62 billion in 1991 which reflected the massive payments for the liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi invasion forces during the 1991 Gulf war.

"The GCC budget deficits will be definitely lower this year. Some members could wipe out their deficits if they did not exceed projected spending," said Henry Azzam, an adviser at the Saudi National Commercial Bank.

Jordan's imports to UAE rise by 44 per cent

AMMAN (AP) — Exports to the United Arab Emirates increased by 44 per cent this year in a sign that ties damaged during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis have improved.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry said Sunday that between January and September, Jordan sold the Gulf state goods worth \$63.2 million, \$19.2 million more than the same period in 1995.

Figures for previous years show that exports to the Emirates were about \$20 million during the same periods.

Last week, the trade ministry said exports to Saudi Arabia more than doubled this year.

Gulf Arabs ostracised Jordan for its perceived tilt towards Iraq following the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Many Gulf states dismissed Jordanian workers, cut off financial aid and reduced trade with the Kingdom, but relations improved last year when Jordan distanced itself from Iraq.

REUTERS

The Business of Information

| Currency | USD | DEM | GBP | CHF | JPY | CAD | ITL | SGD | FRF |
|-------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| US Dollar | 1.0000 | 1.5380 | 0.5954 | 1.3040 | 113.90 | 1.2507 | 1614.65 | 1.7259 | 5.2280 |
| DE Mark | 0.6502 | 1.0000 | 0.3969 | 0.8477 | 73.99 | 0.8779 | 984.50 | 1.1221 | 3.3978 |
| GB Sterling | 1.8795 | 2.5890 | 1.0000 | 2.1652 | 191.39 | 2.2885 | 2543.85 | 2.8986 | 8.7771 |
| CH Franc | 0.7668 | 1.1780 | 0.4583 | 1.0000 | 87.25 | 1.0354 | 1161.10 | 132.30 | 4.0061 |
| JP Yen | 0.0088 | 1.3509 | 0.5228 | 1.1454 | 1.0000 | 1.1864 | 13.30 | 151.58 | 4.5903 |
| CA Dollar | 0.7404 | 1.1342 | 0.4438 | 0.9588 | 1.18 | 1.0000 | 1124.34 | 1.2716 | 3.8425 |
| IT Lira | 0.0007 | 1.0148 | 0.3927 | 0.9060 | 1332.80 | 0.8912 | 1.00 | 11.39 | 3.4481 |
| NL Guilder | 0.5784 | 0.8808 | 0.3448 | 0.7554 | 65.98 | 0.7924 | 977.35 | 1.00 | 3.0271 |
| FR Franc | 0.1914 | 0.2942 | 0.1139 | 0.24925 | 21.75 | 0.2584 | 33.01 | 33.0100 | 1.00 |

| Oil | Last | Previous |
|----------|--------|----------|
| Brent | 23.60 | 23.55 |
| W. Texas | 23.65 | 23.65 |
| Bony | 23.60 | 23.55 |
| Dubai | 20.93 | 20.98 |
| UL Gas | 214.00 | 214.00 |

| Currency | USD | DEM | GBP | CHF | JPY |
|-----------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| SA Riyal | 0.2668 | 0.4102 | 0.15877 | 0.34784 | 30.3573 |
| AE Dirham | 0.2723 | 0.41888 | 0.16211 | 0.35516 | 30.9872 |
| KW Dinar | 3.3417 | 5.14139 | 1.98955 | 4.3492 | 38.5818 |
| BH Dinar | 0.3760 | 0.09165 | 1.58353 | 3.46381 | 302.755 |
| CY Pound | 2.1447 | 3.2985 | 1.2765 | 2.7567 | 244.067 |

| Metal | Bid | Offer |
|-----------------|-------|-------|
| Gold (oz's) | 371.3 | 371.8 |
| Silver (oz's) | 4.72 | 4.74 |
| Platinum (oz's) | 374 | 375 |
| AL (3 Months) | 1538 | 1541 |
| CU (3 Months) | 2242 | 2243 |
| Zinc (3 Months) | 1070 | 1071 |
| Lead (3 Months) | 585 | 586 |
| NI (3 Months) | 6815 | 6820 |

| Period | 1 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 12 |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|
| USD | 5.44 | 5.38 | 5.41 | 5.47 | 5.54 |
| GBP | 6.10 | 6.30 | 6.50 | 6.66 | 6.84 |
| JPY | 0.30 | 0.34 | 0.36 | 0.40 | 0.42 |
| DEM | 3.16 | 3.11 | 3.14 | 3.20 | 3.23 |
| FRF | 3.29 | 3.36 | 3.41 | 3.41 | 3.44 |
| CHF | 1.98 | 1.87 | 1.96 | 1.81 | 2.11 |
| ITL | 7.39 | 7.04 | 6.80 | 6.62 | 6.53 |

| Bourse | Index | Value | Chng. | % Chng. | High | Low | Pr. Ch. |
|-----------|------------|----------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| New York | DOW JONES | 6521.7 | 22.36 | 0.34 | 6532.14 | 6499.34 | 6499.34 |
| New York | S&P 500 | 757.02 | 2.02 | 0.27 | 758.27 | 755 | 755 |
| London | FT-SE 100 | 4058 | 7.8 | 0.19 | 4067.8 | 4051.5 | 4050.2 |
| Tokyo | NIKKEI 225 | 21020.36 | -15.19 | -0.07 | 21155.2 | 20977.5 | 21035.5 |
| Paris | CAC 40 | 2315.86 | 25.35 | 1.11 | 2327.81 | 2300.25 | 2290.31 |
| Frankfurt | DAX | 2845.52 | 28.03 | 0.99 | 2845.52 | 2837.62 | 2817.49 |

| Commodity | Last | Delivery |
|----------------|-------|----------|
| Coffee (c/lbs) | 0 | Spot |
| Cocoa (S/ton) | 1418 | Spot |
| Sugar (S/ton) | 308.9 | Spot |
| Wheat (S/ton) | 133 | Spot |
| Soya (c/lbs) | 21.68 | Spot |
| Tea (kg/kg) | 120 | Spot |
| Barley (S/ton) | 2.24 | Spot |
| Rice (S/ton) | 470 | Spot |

| Currency | Buy | Sell |
|-------------|--------|--------|
| US Dollar | 0.708 | 0.710 |
| GB Sterling | 1.1886 | 1.1955 |
| DE Mark | 0.4604 | 0.4627 |
| CH Franc | 0.5423 | 0.545 |
| FR Franc | 0.1353 | 0.136 |
| JP Yen | 0.6213 | 0.6244 |
| NL Guilder | 0.4098 | 0.4119 |
| IT Lira | 0.4668 | 0.4691 |

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- Pretense
- Leaflike part
- Family member
- Fledgling
- Rapscallion
- Press smooth
- Ordnance
- Anomaly
- Genetic initials
- Concur
- Blustery discourse
- Gansh
- Greet the judge
- Clues for bloodhounds
- Close
- hermetically
- Vietnam city
- Mooch
- Seize
- Wavy, in heraldry
- Fuzzy, var.
- Sow one's wild

by Anthony R. Mupo

DOWN

- Protagonist
- Anthem
- Epic showdown
- Low
- Schoolgirl coil
- Actor Benson
- "A Death in the Family" author
- Contemptible one
- Third in rank
- Bishop's headdress: var.
- Operatic solo
- State of mind
- Henry's louth
- Usher's province
- Burial plain
- Snow backer
- Answer
- Roughen the surface of
- Dugout
- Fine china
- Fabian, at one time
- Loosen
- A Ford
- Heart hook-up
- Vagabond
- Exalts
- Malacca
- Astronomical unit
- Sun barrier
- Photo finish
- Turkish title
- Package
- Fit
- Ancient city near the Dead Sea
- Teen woe
- Watery part of milk
- Bravo!
- Bother

Peanuts

Andy Capp

Mutt'n'Jeff

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson,
Astrologer, Carroll
Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You may find it hard to go along today with plans you have made for the day, however persevere and everything works out fine. Later tonight you can consult with fellow associates and develop a method of operation.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Solve the financial affairs today which pertain to you and you can be quite successful. Use wisdom and everything should work out well towards you gaining much prosperity in the days ahead for your efforts.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You may run bither and you today trying to gain a personal desire, however relax and use positive methods of operation. Later tonight will be good for to seek out the advice of knowledgeable persons.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You can go after your personal goals privately today, however you need to make the correct decisions otherwise you could face great difficulty. Tonight is good for you to go out with your mate and have a romantic time.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) See if you can convince a logical person today to go along with some plan you have towards making your career activities very prosperous. You can have excellent results from your actions if you are careful.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Be sure you know just what it is you desire today before you contact an influential person so you don't waste any of his or her precious time. Come right to the point and don't make any long winded explanations.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You want to get into new interests today, however take one thing at a time so that you won't miss any crucial steps. A new contact could cause you difficulty later this evening, so maintain a weary eye and be cautious.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) If you try to get out of promises you have made today you will discover everything reacting against you. Later this evening will be good if you are cautious with any career activities with fellow associates who have other opinions.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You may be disturbed today because a clever fellow associate will not even listen to your ideas which mean so much to you. You should keep a cool head and only respond to the suggestions from a bigwig who understands.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Study the details connected with your activities today and don't spend too much time on any one. Later this evening you can have a good time with loved ones by going to some special locations and have fun together.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) If something turns up today and you cannot enjoy the pleasures with your loved ones you have planned, take it in stride and don't be disappointed. Later this evening you can have alternate ideas which will work well.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Try to make conversations with others very relaxed today, thereby you won't encounter any difficulties. This evening will be good for consulting with a knowledgeable person and devise a good method of operation.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon.

UAE business leaders heading for Baghdad

DUBAI (AP) — Business leaders in the United Arab Emirates are hoping to cash in on trade opportunities in Iraq once U.N. sanctions against Baghdad are lifted, a leading executive said Sunday.

Majid Al Ghurair, a senior official of the Al Ghurair group of companies, said representatives from about a dozen businesses in the UAE would travel to Iraq in January.

"We will send people ... to study the economic situation, see what is available in terms of business opportunities and start doing business with Iraq," said Mr. Al Ghurair, whose company deals mainly in construction equipment.

He said that Iraq is potentially one of the biggest economies in the region, and the UAE's proximity makes it a natural trading partner.

Businesses here have been encouraged by a call from the UAE for a lifting of the 6-

year-old economic embargo against Baghdad, Mr. Al Ghurair said.

The UAE has urged fellow Arab countries to reconcile with Iraq, which damaged ties with its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. As punishment, the U.N. imposed sanctions on Baghdad, barring oil sales and other transactions.

Last week, the Iraqi government dropped its objections to a U.N.-monitored deal that will allow it to sell \$2 billion in oil to buy food and medical supplies. However, the U.N. has said the lifting of all sanctions will not come until Iraq cooperates with U.N. inspectors overseeing the destruction of long-range missiles and other weaponry.

U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry, winding up a Gulf tour Sunday with a stop in the UAE capital Abu

25-member Jordanian delegation describes talks in Iraq as successful

BAGHDAD (J.T.) — A 25-member Jordanian delegation, which Friday travelled to Baghdad to strengthen Jordanian-Iraqi economic links, Sunday reported successful talks with Iraqi government ministers as well as the Iraqi Chamber of Commerce.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted delegation leader Bassam Saket as saying that Iraqi Minister of Trade Muhammad Mahdi Saleh emphasised his country's intention of maintaining strong ties with the Kingdom.

"There are no restrictions whatsoever on trade with Jordan and the Iraqi government is eager to increase the volume of trade between the two countries in view of Jordan's key role in securing

basic services and imports to Iraq throughout the embargo," Mr. Saleh said.

The United Nations imposed a six-year embargo on Iraq, as of August, 1990. The embargo is currently being partially lifted as the U.N. has agreed to allow Iraq trade oil for food and other basic necessities.

Dr. Saket said that the minister invited Jordanian exporters to increase exports to Iraq once the "oil-for-food" agreement has been enforced and said that the republic hopes to conclude a memorandum of understanding with Jordan concerning future economic and trade relations.

Earlier, the Jordanian delegation held meetings with members of the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce and

discussed future Jordanian-Iraqi trade in light of the U.N.-approved "oil-for-food" agreement.

Dr. Saket said Jordanian exporters hope to see trade between Jordan and Iraq liberalised and expanded to include various commodities.

Baghdad Chamber of Commerce Chairman Zuhair Abdul Ghafoor Yunis met with the delegation, which represents the Jordanian Trade Association (JTA), and said that Iraqi merchants will cooperate closely with the Jordanian exporters in securing the necessary goods for Iraq markets.

The delegation had visited the Jordanian Trade Centre in Baghdad and held talks with Iraqi business commu-

Daily Business Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

New economic order enhances role of private sector — Saket

A NEW economic order is emerging in the region as a result of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit and is making the private sector more active and more "comfortable," according to the president of the Jordanian Exporters' Society, Bassam Saket.

Mr. Saket said as a result of these summits, several of the region's governments have started to take "corrective measures," relying heavily on privatisation and liberalising national economies. He said these governments are now carrying out reforms prescribed by international organisations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

He said progress witnessed in communications was another factor contributing to the business sector's optimism, saying this sector, thanks to advances in electronic communications, is now aware of business opportunities available abroad. This atmosphere of optimism, he continued, encourages foreign investors to return to the region.

But not all things are moving in the right direction, according to Mr. Saket, who accused Israel of placing obstacles in the way of regional peace and development. "People here are politicised... we cannot ignore what happened in Ramallah recently," he said in reference to clashes between Israelis and Palestinians following Israel's decision to open a tunnel near Al Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem. "Today we feel the effects of Israeli threats that do not help neither the Israelis nor the Arabs," said Mr. Saket, who added that Israel should feel that it is part of the region and should abide by agreements it signed with Arab neighbours. (Al Ra'i & Al Aswaq)

Daimler-Benz delegation to arrive in Amman

A DELEGATION representing the German Daimler-Benz Consortium will arrive in Amman next Saturday to hold talks with Jordanian officials on investment opportunities in the Kingdom, according to Nadim Gharghour, chairman of the board of directors of Nadim Gharghour and Sons Company.

Mr. Gharghour said since 1994 the German industrial giant has started a series of meetings with Jordanian officials on various fields of cooperation, mainly developing Jordan's land transport sector, water management, railway projects and technical cooperation.

He noted that Daimler-Benz, which manufactures Mercedes cars and operates in other industrial fields, seems interested in establishing in the Kingdom several projects that might serve the wider region. The consortium, he said, plans to establish projects affiliated to Mercedes-Benz manufacturer at Jordanian free zones. (Al Dustour)

Saudi stocks edge higher in quieter trading week

DUBAI (R) — Shares on the Saudi Arabian stock exchange crept higher in a quieter trading week, figures from the Riyadh-based Bakheet Financial Advisors (BFA) showed on Sunday.

The index moved up 0.69 per cent to close at 149.44 points from the previous week's 148.42 points.

BFA said banking sector stocks dominated trade, accounting for 27 per cent of trading volume of 3.35 million shares.

Services stocks made up 25 per cent of turnover.

Trading value for the week fell to 634.97 million riyals (\$169 million) from 1.6 billion riyals a week earlier.

Of the 60 companies traded, 27 rose, 18 slipped and 15 were unchanged.

The most active shares were Riyadh Bank, which closed at 237 riyals from 241, Saudi Cement — which ended a riyal lower at 184 riyals — and Saudi Basic Industries Corp (SABIC), which was flat at 406 riyals.

Among the top gainers in the week were Al Juuf Agri, which ended 6.9 per cent higher at 62 riyals.

SCECO-Central — the Saudi Consolidated Electric Power Company for the Central Region — firmed 6.1 per cent to 87 riyals from 82, while SCECO-Western rose 5.2 per cent to 81 riyals from 77 a week earlier.

Among the week's losers were Saudi Cable, which shed five riyals to 94 and Al Ahsa Development, which was three per cent weaker at 89 riyals. (\$1=3.75 riyals)

South African gold exports to Dubai surge

DUBAI (AFP) — South Africa has exported 10.29 tonnes of gold to Dubai in the first 10 months of this year, up sharply from the 8.96 tonnes exported to Dubai for all of 1995, the World Gold Council said Sunday.

South Africa, which exported 6.94 tonnes of gold to Dubai in the first 10 months of 1995, was the third largest exporter here in October when it sent in 2.49 tonnes, up from 1.55 tonnes in September and 0.95 tonnes in October 1995.

Switzerland was the top exporter of gold to Dubai, the Gulf region's trade hub, in October when it sent in 20.24 tonnes of the metal, down from 20.78 tonnes in September but up sharply from 15.30 tonnes in October last year, the council said.

Part of the improvement was due to Indians, both in India and the Gulf, who bought presents during the Diwali holiday, or the Hindu festival of lights, it said.

| JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET | | | | | | | | | | | |
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Jordan becomes second fastest to score 25,000

SAN ANTONIO (R) — Michael Jordan scored 35 points to become the second-fastest player in NBA history to reach 25,000 as the Chicago Bulls defeated the San Antonio Spurs 97-88 Saturday.

Jordan, who needed all 35 to reach the 25,000 plateau, hit an 18-footer from the right baseline with 29.4 seconds left in the fourth quarter to attain the milestone. Jordan reached the mark in 782 games, 91 more than it took Wilt Chamberlain.

"It feels pretty good," Jordan said. "I kind of hoped I would do it in Milwaukee so my wife could see it. But I'll take it."

Other than Jordan's achievement, it was business as usual for the Bulls. At 15-1, they are ahead of last season's record 72-win pace by one game.

Chicago improved to 9-1 on the road.

Scottie Pippen finished with 20 points and Bill Wennington, in the absence of injured centre Luc Longley, scored 18 for Chicago.

"I knew I was going to play a lot more with Luc gone," said Wennington, who was 8-of-11 from the field in 32 minutes. "I don't think I've played this many minutes in three years. Anyway, I've got to do what I have to do to help this team win."

Dominique Wilkins scored 25 points and Avery Johnson 23 for the Spurs, who have lost eight straight and fell to 1-7 at home, despite an Alamo record crowd of 37,058.

In Los Angeles, Robert Pack scored 11 of his 24 points in overtime and Jayson Williams had 28 points and 24 rebounds as the New Jersey Nets held on for their first road win of the season, 106-95 over the Clippers.

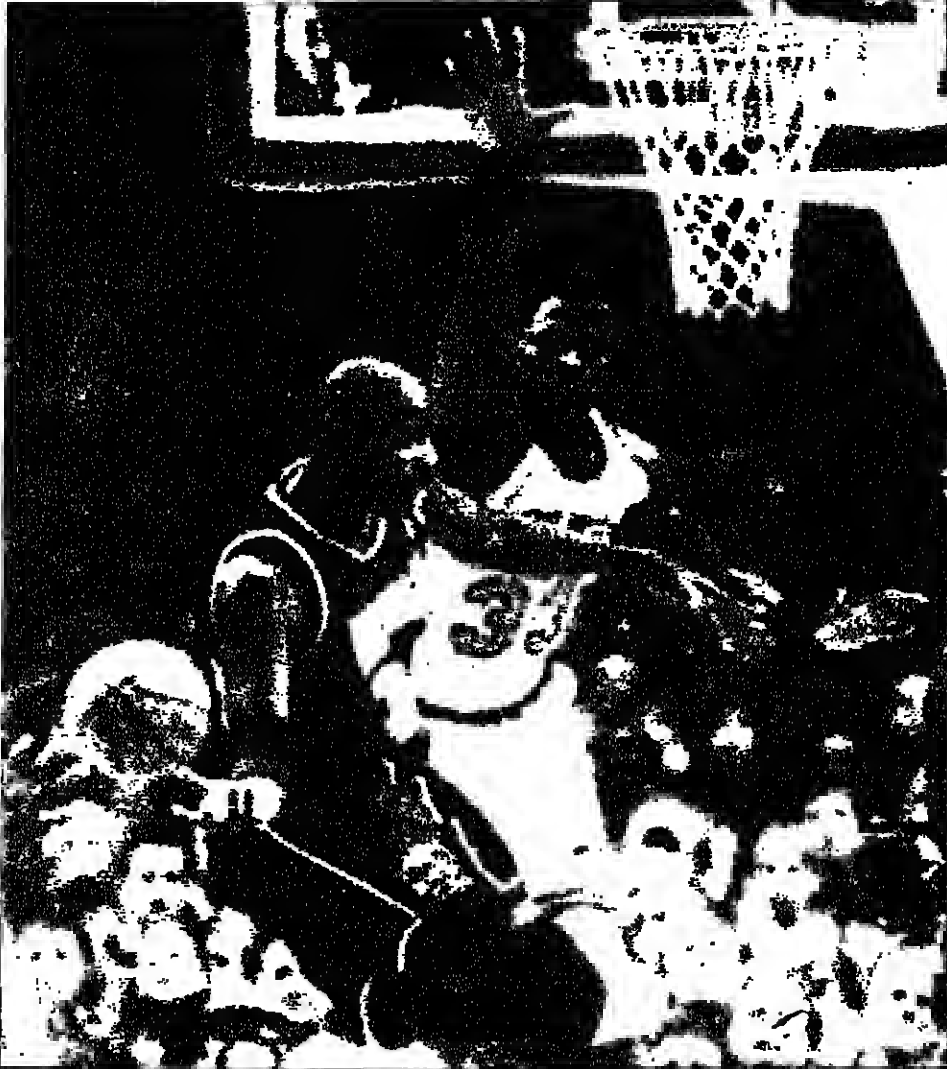
Kendall Gill scored 29 points to lead New Jersey, which snapped a three-game losing streak.

Los Angeles suffered its sixth straight loss.

The Nets set team records with 49 free throws made and 60 attempted.

In Miami, Alonzo Mourning's dunk with 1:41 remaining capped a 9-0 run as the heat nipped the Boston Celtics 78-77 for their seventh straight victory to tie a franchise record.

Tim Hardaway scored 19



New York Knicks' center Patrick Ewing (33) forces Sacramento Kings forward Michael Smith to dish off the ball in front of the basket in the second period of their NBA game at New York's Madison Square Garden (Reuters photo)

points and Mourning had 17 points, 16 rebounds and four blocks for Miami.

At Washington, hakeem olajuwon scored 34 points and grabbed a season-high 17 rebounds as the Houston Rockets used a 15-4 fourth-quarter run to win their ninth straight, 103-99 over the Bulls.

Charles Barkley added 27 points, 10 rebounds and six assists for Houston (15-1), which matched the 1993-94 team for the best start in franchise history. The Rockets are the only undefeated road team in the NBA (8-0).

Chris Webber scored 34 points for the Bulls, who have lost consecutive games following a three-game winning streak.

In New York, Patrick Ewing recorded 29 points and 14 rebounds and John Starks scored all 13 of his points in the fourth quarter as the Knicks snapped a three-game skid, 115-101 over the Sacramento Kings. Buck Williams con-

tributed a season-high 16 points and eight rebounds off the bench, while Charles Oakley had 13, 10 and seven assists for New York, which posted a season high in points scored.

In Philadelphia, Allen Iverson scored five of his 23 points in a 7-0 fourth-quarter run and Jerry Stackhouse had 31 points as the 76ers turned back the Vancouver Grizzlies 96-90.

Iverson also had nine assists for Philadelphia, which has won three of its last four games.

Vancouver fell to 0-9 on the road.

At Minnesota, Tom Gugliotta scored 25 points as the Timberwolves set a franchise record for fewest points allowed in a 79-70 victory over the Toronto Raptors.

The Timberwolves' previous best was 71, set against Dallas in 1993.

Damon Stoudamire scored 20 points for the Raptors, who were held to a franchise-low in scoring. The previous low was 75 in a loss at Sacramento last January.

In Milwaukee, Glen Rice scored 23 points, including seven during a 9-0 fourth-quarter run as the Charlotte Hornets defeated the Bucks 94-87.

Anthony Mason, who shut down all-star forward Vin Baker, had 18 points, nine rebounds and one assist and Dell Curry added 22 points for Charlotte.

Glenn Robinson scored 27 points for the Bucks, who have lost six of their last nine games.

In Cleveland, former Cavalier Gerald Wilkins scored 18 points including a crucial three-pointer with 3:25 as the Orlando Magic held on for an 86-82 victory.

RESULTS

| | | | |
|--------------|-----|-------------|---------|
| New York | 115 | Sacramento | 101 |
| Orlando | 86 | Cleveland | 82 |
| Miami | 78 | Boston | 77 |
| Philadelphia | 96 | Vancouver | 90 |
| Houston | 103 | Washington | 99 |
| Minnesota | 79 | Toronto | 70 |
| Charlotte | 94 | Milwaukee | 87 |
| Chicago | 97 | San Antonio | 88 |
| New Jersey | 106 | LA Clippers | 95 (OT) |

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Nilis scores twice to extend PSV's lead

AMSTERDAM (R) — Dutch top scorer Luc Nilis bagged his 12th and 13th goals of the season in PSV Eindhoven's 4-1 defeat of lowly NEC Nijmegen on Saturday.

The win extended PSV's lead at the top of the Dutch first division to six points.

Brazilian striker Marcelo opened the scoring for PSV in the 39th minute before Emiel Van Eijkeren equalised from the penalty spot, scoring NEC's first goal in Eindhoven for 20 years.

Van Eijkeren converted his spot-kick home in the 48th minute after midfielder Philip Cocu handled the ball inside the box.

PSV regained the lead with the second penalty of the match, awarded after their defender Arthur Numan appeared to stumble over the leg of NEC skipper Luc Maes.

NEC midfielder Ulrich Cruden was sent off for protesting against the decision before Nilis beat goalkeeper Wilfried Brookhuis from the spot.

Nilis added PSV's third with a solo effort after 83 minutes and Boudewijn Zenden made the score 4-1 in the final minute.

After 18 matches, PSV are now six points clear of second-placed Feyenoord and 14 clear of defending champions Ajax Amsterdam, who both have a game in hand.

Leverkusen return to top with win over Cologne

BONN (R) — Early-season leaders Bayer Leverkusen seized the chance to return to the top of the German First Division on Saturday with a 4-2 win over fifth-placed Cologne, intensifying a four-way struggle for the title.

Leverkusen had their chance because champions Borussia Dortmund managed only a 1-1 draw at home to Hamburg on Friday and league leaders Bayern Munich were travelling to third-placed VfB Stuttgart on Sunday.

In the day's other main games, managerless Fortuna Dusseldorf, without a win in seven matches, beat eighth-placed Werder Bremen 4-1 and 1860 Munich drew 1-1 with seventh-placed Karlsruhe.

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Morocco's Kawkab erase deficit to win CAF Cup

MARRAKESH (R) — Morocco's Kawkab of Marrakesh won the Confederation of African Football (CAF) Cup on Saturday when they overturned a 3-1 first leg deficit by beating Tunisia's Etoile Sportive du Sahel 2-0 in the second leg.

The Moroccans won on away goals.

The Kawkabis took the lead after 15 minutes through striker Kaddaoui Amarani and dominated the rest of the half in a match played in front of 50,000

fans. They scored the vital second goal a minute before halftime through Morocco midfielder Hicham Dintai, who converted a fine pass from Mohamed Badraoui.

The Tunisians fought back in the second half but failed to breach the home side's defence.

"We missed several opportunities to score at the beginning of the match... That blew our chances of victory," Etoile coach Abdelkader Youmi said afterwards.



Switzerland's Ciriaco Sforza of Internazionale jumps over Daniele Berretta of Cagliari during their Italian first division soccer match in Milan. The match ended in a 2-2 draw (Reuters photo)

Inter salvage point with last-minute penalty

MILAN (R) — A last-minute penalty from French playmaker Youri Djorkaeff salvaged a 2-2 draw for Internazionale against strugglers Cagliari Saturday which took the Milan side to joint top in Serie A.

Cagliari, languishing in the relegation zone, dominated the second half and looked good for a surprise victory before their Swiss international defender Ramon Vega was penalised for handling the ball in the area with seconds left.

It was the second successive match that Cagliari had conceded an equaliser in the final seconds. Fabio Pecchia salvaged a 1-1 draw for Napoli against them last Sunday with a goal in the 90th minute.

Englishman Roy Hodgson's side had

started strongly in front of 42,000 fans at the San Siro. Maurizio Ganz giving them the lead in the eighth minute when he controlled a cross and slotted home from close range.

The goal forced Cagliari to push forward and their persistent attacks paid off just before the interval when striker Roberto Muzzi beat Italy goalkeeper Gianluca Pagliuca.

A freekick by defender Stefano Bettarini, which may have been deflected by Uruguayan Dario Silva, put Cagliari ahead in the 49th minute, but the Sardinians were then left to rue two wasted chances before Djorkaeff earned Inter a point with his spot-kick. Inter are now level on 20 points with Vicenza.

Futre set to leave West Ham

SHEFFIELD (R) — Paolo Futre, the Portuguese striker once hailed as 'the European Maradona', looks likely to leave West Ham next week for an uncertain future.

Futre joined the London side on a free transfer from AC Milan in the close season but has failed to shake off a knee injury that has blighted what promised to be a glittering career.

West Ham manager Harry Redknapp, who saw his side draw 0-0 with Sheffield Wednesday on Saturday, said there was little point in Futre staying at Upton Park.

"Paolo is a great little professional but unfortunately came to us with a bad knee injury," Redknapp explained. "He is not fit enough to play or train. He'll never get back to being the player he was as he is constantly struggling."

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THE ROCK

(IN DOLBY STEREO)

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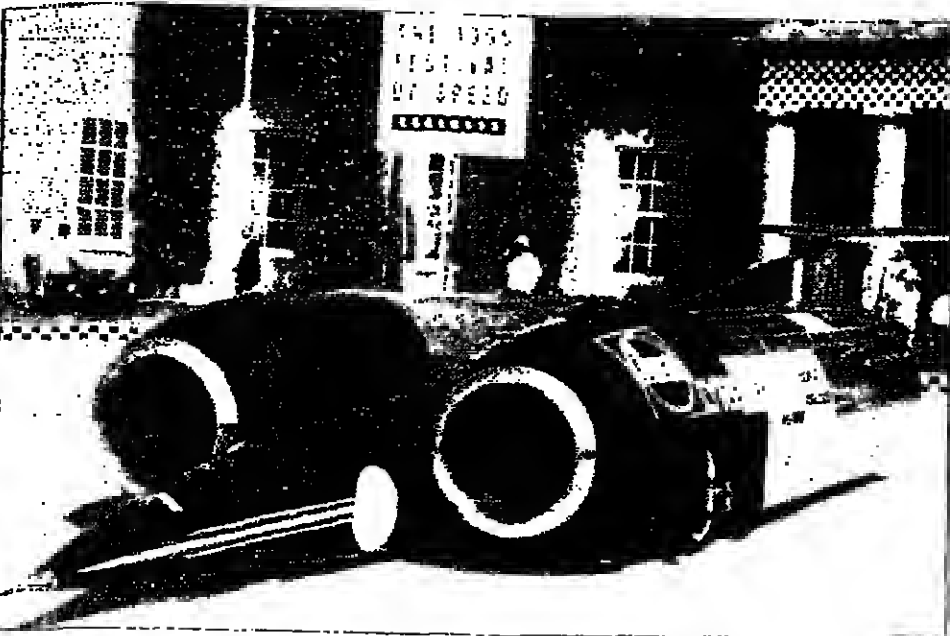
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Al Jafr Supersonic attempt abandoned — for now

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The attempt by the Thrust SSC team to set a land speed record were abandoned due to the heavy rains that flooded the area at Al Jafr. Project Director Richard Noble announced Sunday. "Unfortunately our attempt was beaten by the unusual heavy rain that hit the area cutting off access to Petra and Wadi Mousa and flooding the Jafr area," Mr. Noble told a press conference at the Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ).

He said it took the Thrust SSC team six hours to evacuate their headquarters at Al Jafr desert — just completing within 20 minutes of start of the flash flood.

"We hoped that the desert would only partially flood and then dry rapidly," Noble said, "but in fact the floods continued to destroy the entire track system," he added.

He explained that the track needed three weeks in favourable conditions to dry and then a further two to three weeks to restore the track.

"We don't have the resources to stay in Jordan for five weeks, so we are returning the car and the

team to U.K. as soon as possible to regroup for 1997," he said.

The Thrust team had arrived in Jordan Oct. 26 and after 16 days of preparation, the first run was achieved in Nov. 12 with a first run attempt speed attained at 368 kph (230 mph). Maximum subsequent speed achieved was 529 kph (331 mph) where the car exhibited rear wheel shimmy (rapid steering oscillations).

Another attempt was aborted for the same reason. By improving the suspension system, the car was ready to run, but the floods prevented the crucial development run.

The Thrust SSC team are in competition with the U.S. and Australian team to achieve the first ever supersonic 1210 kph (750 mph) world land speed record.

The U.S. team claims to have reached 675 mph but subsequently crashed and are now into rebuilding.

The Australian team will commence operations in January. The current world land speed record is 1019.44 kph (633.468 mph) held by Richard Noble, project director of Thrust SSC since Oct. 4 1983.

Driven by British fighter

pilot Andy Green, Thrust SSC weighs 10 tonnes has 106,000hp, twin jet engines, hydraulic suspension, active computer-controlled ride and rear wheel steering making it the most powerful car ever built.

The 26 person Thrust SSC team had been operating from Prince Faisal Air Base at Al Jafr.

The team did not reach their target now but their attempt was put on halt and will return to finish what they have started in March 1997.

"We haven't finished, we haven't failed, it is only a pause and we will return in March," Noble said.

The team expressed their gratitude to His Majesty King Hussein, His Royal Highness Prince Faisal, the Armed Forces and the people of Jordan for their cooperation.

1st Division Basketball Championship

Orthodoxi defeat Al Ahli to top standings

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Sunday's clash of the country's traditional all-time basketball rivals turned out to be a one-sided match in which titleholders Al Orthodoxi sailed past former champions Al Ahli 83-63 to top the standings following the conclusion of the preliminary round of the First Division Basketball Championship.

The match was preceded by the women's inaugural All-Star basketball tourney in which the Babiche team beat Today 43-31.

The result of the men's match does not have any bearing on the final standings as both teams together with Al Jazireh and Al Jalil qualified to the playoffs the winner of which will be crowned this season's champion.

The match was a clear indicator however that fans can expect interesting, competitive matches

in the playoffs starting Dec. 5 in which Al Jazireh is expected to be a strong contender and may have a serious say on the standings.

Al Jazireh's results against both top teams was closer than Sunday's match. Al Orthodoxi beat Al Jazireh 95-83 and Al Ahli could only manage a three-point 63-60 win.

Like last year, Al Jazireh have made the competition a three-way race. However, Al Orthodoxi seem to have the upper hand and ability to keep their title.

They demonstrated that clearly in their match against Al Ahli as they built a commanding lead throughout the match which they expanded to over 23 points at times before sealing their 20-point win.

Although new faces represented both teams, Al Ahli's younger lineup clearly missed the efforts of three of the Kingdom's top stars — Marwan Ma'touq, Youssef Zaghloul and Naser

Bushnaq.

Hilal Barakat led Al Orthodoxi with a series of three-pointers together with agile playmaker Fadi Saqqa as they expanded the lead to 24-12 and 35-13. However, Al Ahli managed to outscore their rivals 11-2 to reduce the gap to 38-24. Al Orthodoxi ended the first half leading 42-25.

Al Orthodoxi had an explosive start to the second half as the young lineup combined their efforts to lead 54-30 and 60-38 making their rivals look like any of the competition's other struggling teams.

Fadi Saqqa and Naser Bassam continued to score as Ramez Hammoudeh and Mohammad Shamali scored for Al Ahli.

Al Orthodoxi's Ghazi Naber ended the match with a final-second buzzer beater to seal the match 83-63.

Valdano makes successful debut; Real stay top

MADRID (R) — Real Madrid ensured they will go into next weekend's big game with Barcelona as leaders of the Spanish first division after coming home from Sporting Gijon with a 1-0 victory on Saturday.

There was also good news for former Real manager Jorge Valdano, who made a successful home debut for Valencia in the 2-0 victory over Celta Vigo, while Atletico Madrid moved into fourth place with a 1-0 win over racing

Santander.

Real captain Fernando Hierro — who moments previously had been lucky to escape without a booking for a heavy challenge — clinched the victory in the 19th minute after rising well to head home a corner from Brazilian defender Roberto Carlos.

Keeper Bodo Illgner was in fine form as sporting piled on the pressure, but Real upped their game and were able to hold on in the second half of a rain-soaked match.

Jorge Valdano's first game on the bench since taking over from Luis Aragonés saw Valencia end a run of poor results thanks to a first half goal by Russian midfielder Valery Karpin and a late clincher from Inaki Hurtado.

A solitary Juan Eduardo Esnaider goal midway through the first half was enough to put reigning champions Atletico

Madrid a point ahead of fifth-placed Real Betis, who play at Compostela on Sunday.

Another Esnaider goal was disallowed and Kiko Narvaez hit the post twice as Atletico had the best of an otherwise dull game.

In their last six games Radomir Antic's side have recovered from a poor start by clocking up five wins and a draw — in the Camp

Nou against Barcelona.

Tenerife slipped up ahead of their UEFA Cup second leg game at Feyenoord by throwing away a 1-0 lead over Rayo Vallecano, who struck back with two goals from Angel Alcazar to run out 2-1 winners.

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Amnesty urges PNA to respect human rights

AMMAN (J.T.) — A worrying increase in human rights abuses by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) over the past two years has been coupled with an emerging climate of fear and intimidation, Amnesty International said in a new report released Monday.

"Victims of brutal torture and other abuses are now afraid to speak out and give their names in the face of threats," the human rights organisation said in the report, a copy of which was sent to the Jordan Times.

"This is a fearsome indictment of a system which ignores the people who complain of abuse and threatens them with reprisals."

In its report, Amnesty International described the "growing climate of fear" where journalists who report abuses are arrested, their newspapers closed down and prominent human rights activists harassed.

"When Dr. Iyad Al Sarraj — a high profile leader of the very citizens' rights commission set up by President (Yasser) Arafat — is arrested three times, beaten up and brought to court on trumped-up charges, it is no wonder that people not internationally known are terrified of the security forces," Amnesty said.

Over the past two years, Amnesty delegates, including medical personnel, visited PNA several times. In February 1996, the secretary general of the organisation, Pierre Sane, raised human rights issues with President Arafat and members of the legislative council.

In its report, Amnesty International documents human rights abuses committed by the 10 or so Palestinian security services in the areas under the PNA's jurisdiction. "Arbitrary political arrest and prolonged detention without charge or trial of hundreds of suspected political opponents; widespread use of torture and unlawful killings; the failure to adequately investigate abuses and the arrest of journalists

and human rights defenders who denounce them — contributed to create a climate of disillusionment and fear," it said.

"Mass detentions of suspected opponents of the peace process have been carried out, in the context of international pressure by Israel and the United States of America, to clamp down on those responsible for violent attacks on Israeli citizens. While the (PNA) has a duty to bring to justice those who have committed violent acts, this should be done according to internationally recognised standards. There can be no justification for the use of torture and other serious human rights abuses," Amnesty said.

"The different police or security forces operate within and, on occasion, outside the areas under the jurisdiction of the (PNA) with minimal accountability. The different branches of the security forces appear frequently neither to coordinate nor even to communicate with each other. One former detainee told Amnesty International delegates: 'I was arrested twice and held by four different police forces without charge or trial. I said to the police chief, 'Where is the law?' He said 'We are the law.'"

"The legal system has been marginalised and ignored as political detainees are held with no reference to any law. Orders by the Palestinian High Court of Justice to release detainees kept in prison for months without being charged or tried are ignored. Few of those arrested by security forces for political reasons now make any effort to appoint a lawyer, they know it will make no difference. The few trials of political detainees which have taken place, have been before the State Security Court, instituted by decree of President Arafat in February 1995.

"In these courts defendants are prosecuted, judged and even defended by officers in the security forces. This is a travesty of justice," Amnesty International said.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Sunday receives Mohammad Ahmad Abdullah, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Egyptian parliament, and (right) Pakistani Chief of Staff Lieutenant-General Jihankar Kramat (Petra photos)

Crown Prince Hassan holds talks with Egyptian parliamentarian, honours Pakistani chief of staff

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Sunday stressed the important role Arab parliamentarians can play in defending Arab causes.

The Regent, who was speaking during an audience at the Royal Court with the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Egyptian

Assembly, Mohammad Ahmad Abdullah, voiced Jordan's appreciation to Egypt's role in supporting Arab causes.

The Regent discussed with Mr. Abdullah issues of common concern to the Arab countries and the latest developments of the Middle East peace process. The audience was attended by Senator Jawad Al

Anani. Dr. Abdullah took part in the Euro-Arab Parliamentary Dialogue which concluded in Amman on Sunday (see page 1).

The Regent also received at the Royal Court Pakistani Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Jihankar Kramat and discussed with him means to boost bilateral

relations. The Regent conferred upon the Pakistani chief of staff the Al Istiglal Military Medal of the First Order. Attending the audience was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai. The Regent also held talks with European Minister of Cooperation and Finnish Minister of Trade Ole Norrback (see page 3).

Lloyd's experts check Iraqi border

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Lloyd's shipping intelligence experts have gone to Iraq's northern town of Zakho to inspect Iraq's preparations for the flow of humanitarian goods under a U.N. oil deal, the official Iraqi News Agency (INA) said on Sunday.

"A group of international experts from Lloyd's company charged with the study of practical measures for the implementation of the memorandum of understanding between Iraq and the United Nations have arrived in Zakho," INA said.

The three experts under Ivor Lavers arrived in Baghdad on Wednesday. They are part of a forward team to examine Iraqi trade routes prior to the implementation of the deal whose terms Iraq accepted on Nov. 25.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali sent the experts to examine Iraq's southern port of Umm Qasr and its border posts with both Turkey and Jordan.

A U.N. source in Baghdad said the experts spent two days at Umm Qasr but declined comment on their impressions.

The Iraqi news agency said the first batch of international oil tankers was expected to arrive in Iraq on Thursday. Iraq's partial oil sale pact with the U.N. allows it to export \$2 billion of crude oil over six months to enable it to buy food and medicine.

The agreement is designed to ease the suffering of the Iraqi people, emanating from crippling trade sanctions imposed for Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

It provides for strict U.N. monitoring of oil sales and food distribution. The Lloyd's inspectors were to have travelled to Zakho on Saturday before going to Trebil, on the border with Jordan in western Iraq, but they delayed their trip north to allow more time for talks with Iraqi officials, a U.N. source said.

Zakho, Umm Qasr and Trebil are to be used for imports of humanitarian supplies once Baghdad makes its return to the international oil market under the oil-for-food accord.

Iraq on Monday informed the United Nations it had finally accepted the U.N. terms for monitoring the accord signed on

May 20, under Security Council Resolution 986.

Decisions have yet to be taken on where to house the inspectors while a pumping and metering station on the Iraqi-Turkish pipeline has to be repaired, U.N. officials said. Iraq expects repairs to be done by Dec. 5.

PUK accuses rival Kurds of violence

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), a leading Iraqi Kurdish group, Sunday accused rival Kurds of killing nine of its members in northern Iraq despite a five-week-old ceasefire, Turkey's Anatolia news agency said.

It quoted the PUK radio broadcasting in northern Iraq as saying that fighters from the rival Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) had recently stopped a vehicle travelling in the region, dragged out eight PUK members and shot them dead.

According to the PUK radio, the KDP had also executed another PUK member arrested earlier in the Iraqi Kurdish "capital" of Erbil, the agency said.

Anatolia gave no other details and the report could not be independently confirmed.

Under heavy U.S. pressure, the two sides had agreed to a ceasefire on Oct. 23, and PUK's allegation is the first of a major ceasefire violation since then.

Fighting raged in northern Iraq in late August as the KDP of Massud Barzani, backed by Baghdad troops, attacked the PUK of Jalal Talabani, capturing Erbil.

In two rounds of U.S.-mediated peace talks in Ankara since the Oct. 23 truce, the KDP and the PUK pledged to abide by the truce, and a joint team has begun work to define a ceasefire line.

The two Kurdish groups have been controlling northern Iraq in defiance of Baghdad since the end of the 1991 Gulf war. But fighting broke out between them in May 1994 over power-sharing and tax revenues. More than 2,500 people have been killed in violence since then.

Prisoner release expected soon

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The release of prisoners who qualify for release under a Royal amnesty is expected to start immediately after the Council of Ministers studies and approves recommendations of a technical committee on Tuesday, officials said Sunday.

They said Justice Minister Abdul Karim Dughni was scheduled to present the recommendations to the council during Saturday's regular session, but the four-hour meeting was almost entirely taken up by discussions of the 1997 draft budget, the officials said. As such, the issue could not be discussed on Saturday, they said.

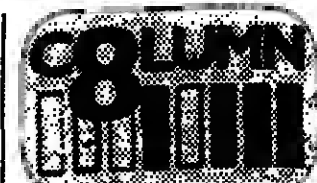
Saturday's Cabinet discussions led to some changes in the allocations for several ministries and departments before the council formally adopted the final draft of the budget and a speech that Finance Minister Marwan Awad would make in Parliament while presenting the draft budget to the legislature, said the officials.

Meanwhile, the recommendations of the technical committee on the release of prisoners were reported to cover nearly 1,500 cases. It was not known how many actually qualified for release under parameters set by the technical committee under advice from the Ministry of Justice.

Unofficial reports put the figure at between 1,100 and 1,200. The amnesty, which does not cover prisoners convicted of threatening national security, spying, rape and murder as well as those who might have benefited from earlier pardons.

One of the key targets of the pardon is a group of people facing charges in connection with the mid-August riots in the south following the rechanneling of subsidies for bread and fodder.

(Continued on page 7)



'Edward VIII was no Nazi, just fool'

LONDON (R) — A royal mystery will be solved this week when secret British documents will show King Edward VIII was no Nazi sympathiser but a "damn fool," according to the Express on Sunday newspaper. The paper said secret foreign office documents — previously kept back by the royal family for fear of humiliating the former king — would be released on Tuesday. They will apparently clear up long-running controversy over Edward's political sympathies, with many historians believing Edward actively helped Adolf Hitler. Edward was king of Britain from January to December 1936, when he renounced the throne to marry American divorcee Wallis Simpson. After the abdication crisis, Edward moved to France and the paper said the documents show British concerns at the couple's lavish lifestyle and his ill-considered visits to pro-German Spain and Portugal in 1940. The Express said Queen Elizabeth had given permission for the papers to be made public and quoted one insider as saying: "The papers confirm Edward was a damn fool, but not a traitor."

Son's 'blood-just' worries Diana

LONDON (R) — Britain's Princess Diana, already at war with Prince Charles, is now fighting with her son William over his lust for blood sports, the Sunday Mirror reported. "Diana: My fear for gun-crazed Wills" the paper said in a front-page story detailing a new rift inside the royal family. It said Diana feared her eldest son would turn into "a remorseless hunter with a blood-just" after his first kill. William is believed to have stalked and shot his first stag last month on Queen Elizabeth's Balmoral estate in the Scottish highlands. The 14-year-old prince reportedly made the kill in the company of his 12-year-old brother Harry and Prince Charles.

Octogenarian bent upon remarriage

SASSARI, Sardinia (R) — An Italian judge issued a temporary injunction on Friday stopping an 84-year-old pensioner from marrying a 19-year-old. Judge Guido Vecchione issued his ruling at the request of the man's four children 24 hours before widow Francesca Brundu had been due to wed Luisa Carneglia, 19, at a civil ceremony. The judge set a further hearing for January 27 to decide whether the injunction should be permanent. Brundu said he was still determined to marry but had decided his bride would not be Luisa after it emerged at the hearing that she had a conviction for theft. "That girl told me a pack of lies," the news agency AGI quoted Brundu as saying. "Now I have to find myself a sensible woman, one who doesn't have birds in her head."

Sri Lanka to sell ex-president's bed

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lanka will auction off luxury imported furniture, including a gold-plated bed and several bathroom suites, ordered by President Ranasinghe Premadasa who was assassinated in 1993, an auctioneer said on Saturday. Premadasa ordered the goods through the government board of investment for a countryside bungalow, said Dunstan Kelaart of auctioneers Dunstan and Dallas Kelaart. "They were never used due to his unexpected death," Kelaart said. Premadasa was killed by a suspected separatist Tamil rebel suicide bomber during a May Day rally in Colombo. The consignment up for sale, valued at around 25 million rupees (\$450,000), consists of tapestry, lace curtains, woolen carpets, crystal glass chandeliers, lamp fittings and luxury furniture.

Algerian media refute charge of plebiscite fraud

ALGIERS (AP) — Algerian state media on Saturday rejected charges that the overwhelming passage of a referendum banning Islamic parties and giving the president more power was a sham.

State radio said a 14-hour delay in reporting the referendum results was due to a "quirk" in the "obsolete" communications system of the interior ministry.

Thursday's referendum to revise Algeria's constitution was approved by 86 per cent of the voters, the government had announced. It said 14 per cent voted against it, with a total voter turnout of 9 per cent.

Opposition parties and many Algerian journalists disagreed, suggesting turnout figures and results were fabricated.

The Front for Socialist Forces (FFS) had claimed the lapse between the closing of polls and announcement of results was due to disagreement within the government over how high to set official figures.

"The fact they waited the whole night is proof the government is in disarray," said Seddik Debaili, secretary general of the party.

Said Sadi, whose Rally for Culture and Democracy Party watched the election from outside polling centers in several cities, estimated a nationwide turnout of only 30 per cent of Algeria's 16 million voters.

"With fraud of this scope,

(President Liamine) Zeroual is sending a message that he will do what he wants, Mr. Sadi said.

Algerian Radio Channel 3 claimed the referendum's strong backing was due to the popularity of Mr. Zeroual, who won 61 per cent of the votes in last year's presidential elections, and the backing of two candidates who had

finished behind Mr. Zeroual.

The radio said the influence of Mr. Sadi, who also ran for president, was "limited" to two cities, and that the referendum's success was a "major failure" on a national scale for the FFS.

The proposal bans political parties based on religion, language and regionalism, a reference to Algeria's substantial Berber community, which long has worked for official recognition of its language.

The government says the ban and other amendments to the constitution are aimed at stabilising the country after nearly five years of an Islamic insurgency that has taken more than 60,000 lives.

But Algerian and foreign analysts say the changes, which include creation of a new upper chamber of parliament, are designed to enable Mr. Zeroual to block unwelcome political initiatives.

NEWS IN BRIEF

December 8 declared public holiday

AMMAN (Petra) — All ministries, government departments and public institutions will observe a holiday on Sunday, Dec. 8 in observance of Al Isra'a Wal Miraj (the Prophet Muhammad's nocturnal journey to the heaven), a communiqué issued by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabarti said.

Regent condoles Egyptian leader

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Sunday sent a cable of condolences to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, expressing grief and sorrow over the death of Egyptian Minister Abdul Hadi Radi. The Regent wished President Mubarak continued good health and happiness.

Regent congratulates Sheikh Zayed

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Sunday sent a cable to Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan, president of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), congratulating him on the 30th anniversary of his assumption of constitutional powers in Abu Dhabi and the UAE's silver jubilee.

Arabs banned from serving Netanyahu

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's internal security agency has banned Arab waiters or cooks from working at receptions attended by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu or other high ranking officials, the Haaretz newspaper said Sunday. A temporary employment agency director, who recounted several instances when he or his staff were told by the security service Shin Bet to replace Arab waiters with Jews, condemned the practice as "racist and discriminatory," the paper reported. Zahava Galon, secretary general of the left-wing Meretz Party, passed on the complaint to Mr. Netanyahu's cabinet director general David Agmon, who did not deny the incidents but said they were motivated purely by security needs, it said.

Egypt to begin aerial search for uranium

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt is planning aerial exploration for radioactive materials in the country's desert regions, Energy Minister Maher Abaza said in statements published Sunday. The prospecting operations, using an ultra-modern plane, will cover around three quarters of Egypt's deserts, said Mr. Abaza, quoted on Sunday by the government newspaper Al Akhbar. Mr. Abaza said Egypt has committed three million Egyptian pounds (about \$900,000) to the first exploration operations and to evaluate uranium reserves, adding that four regions showed "promising signs" of the existence of uranium. Mr. Abaza said the radioactive material would be used for peaceful means in Egypt.

House panels elect heads

AMMAN (Petra) — Seven Lower House Committees on Sunday elected their chairpersons and rapporteurs, and three other panels will do so on Monday. The Agricultural and Water Committee elected Deputy Hatem Ghazawi as its chair, and Jamil Al Hushoush as its rapporteur. The Labour and Social Development Committee elected Nader Abu Sha'a as its chair and Sulaiman Al Sa'd as rapporteur. The Energy and Mineral Resources Committee elected each of Badr Rayad and Fawaz Zu'bi as chair and rapporteur respectively.

Mr. Tawfiq Kreishan and Mr. Fawaz Zu'bi were elected chair and rapporteur of the General Services, Tourism and Antiquities Committee and Fawzi Tueimeh and Abdul Majid Al Azzam were elected chair and rapporteur respectively of the Arab and International Affairs Committee.

The Rural and Badia Affairs Committee elected Mohammad Hneid as its chair and Mansour Ben Tarif as rapporteur, and the Palestine Committee elected Abdul Aziz Jabr as chair and Abdul Majid Al Aqushi as rapporteur. The administrative, education and culture, and the health and environmental committees today elect their chairpersons and rapporteurs.

Yemen sends formal request to join GCC

SANAA (Agencies) — Yemen has sent an official request to join the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a Yemeni official said Sunday.

"Yemen's geographical location makes joining the council a natural step for us," said the official, who asked not to be identified. Yemen is the only country on the Arabian Peninsula that is not part of the council.

The membership request has received preliminary approval from members Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Qatar, the official said.

Kuwait, another member, is still angry over Yemen's perceived pro-Iraq stand after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait and is opposed to the bid, the official said.

Saudi Arabia, the most influential of the Gulf nations, has not yet commented. The official said he expects Saudi Arabia to link its approval of Yemen's membership with progress on border talks between the two countries.

Large sections of the 2,000-kilometre border between the two largest countries on the peninsula remain undefined and the dispute has often flared into armed confrontation.

The two countries signed security and economic agreements this year, signaling a thaw in a six-year rift also caused by Yemen's perceived pro-Iraq tilt during the Gulf war.

The GCC was formed in 1981 to promote closer political and economic ties and has not been expanded since. Council members travel freely within the GCC and do not need work permits. Membership in the alliance would allow Yemen, an impoverished nation of 17 million with severe unemployment, easier access to the oil-rich Gulf economies.

Bahrain urged not to boycott summit

A Kuwaiti newspaper urged on Sunday to drop its threat to boycott the upcoming GCC summit over its border dispute with Qatar. "It's in the Gulf's interest to have all the organisation's countries participate in the summit, because any absence would be a setback for the process of their cooperation," Al Rai Al Am newspaper said.

Bahrain on Saturday accused Qatar of having ignored its efforts at reconciliation and repeated its determination to boycott the summit scheduled for Dec. 7-9 in Doha.

"We gain nothing if Qatar and Bahrain resume their argument over their border differences. Even if Bahrain believes it has suffered an injustice, it should not boycott the summit," the newspaper said. "We invite Bahrain to attend the summit in Doha, and express its point of view on their differences with Qatar. We are only one people and if a member suffers, all the others will be affected," it said.

In a statement published Saturday by the Kuwaiti paper Al Watan, Bahrain's prime minister, Sheikh Khalifa Ben Salman Al Khalifa, said his country's position on the summit had not changed. Qatar has ignored every effort by Bahrain to find a solution, he said.